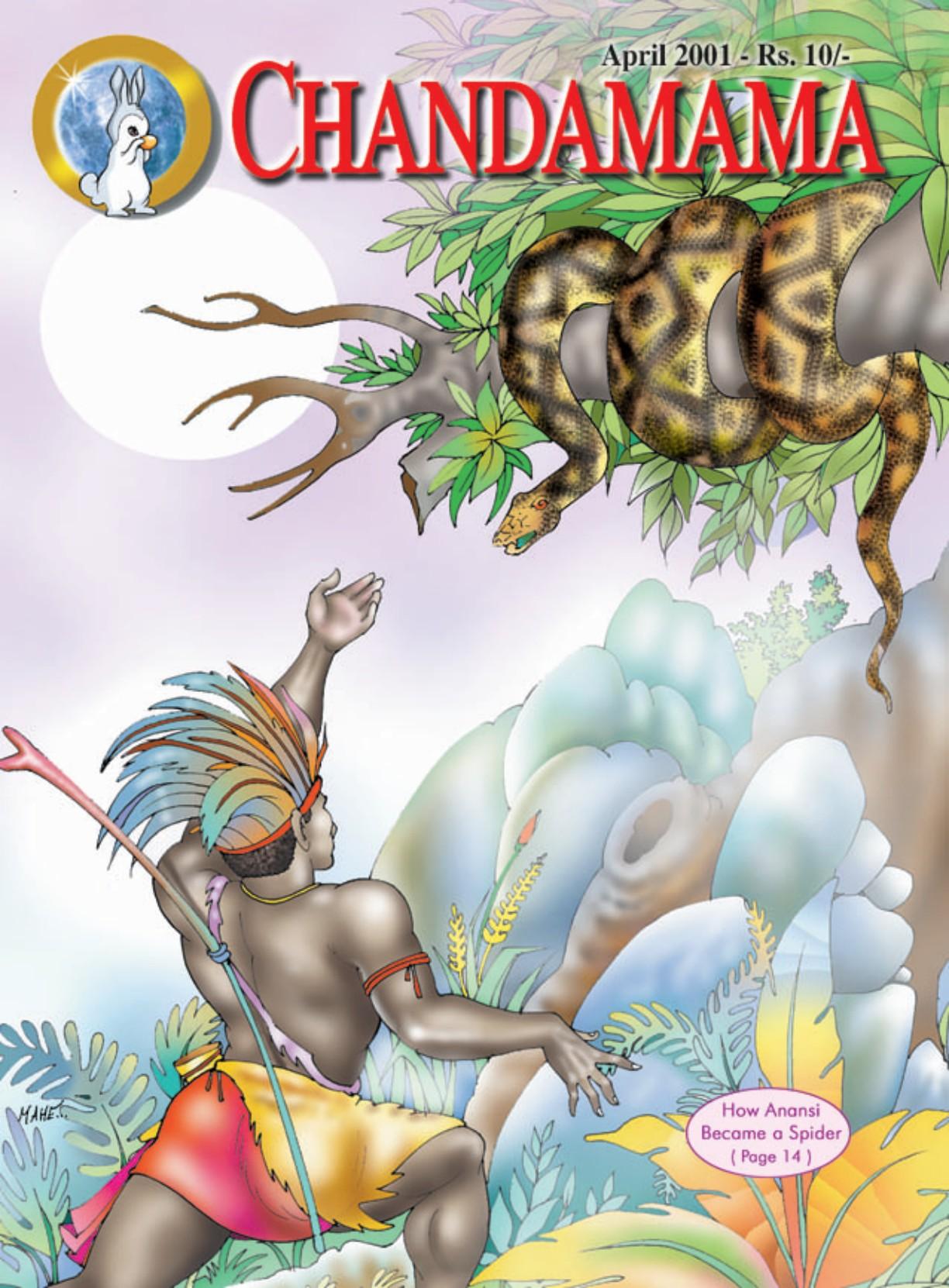


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CHANDAMAMA



How Anansi
Became a Spider
(Page 14)

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CHANDAMAMA

Vol. 31

April 2001

No. 4

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HIGHLIGHTS



The Magic Necklace



**Saga
of
Vishnu**



**Bobby
Outwits
His
Friends**



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If any of those who are following the adventures of **Garuda the Invincible** (Comics) has missed an issue they may ask for a spare copy. Remember, first come first served. - **Publisher**



Founded by
B. Nagi Reddi and Chakrapani

The President's Perspective

It is customary for the President of India to address the joint session of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha to mark the start of the Budget session of the Parliament. President K.R. Narayanan's address on February 19 came in the wake of India's "one step forward" exercise by declaring a unilateral ceasefire in Kashmir's border with Pakistan during the month of Ramzan, and two extensions of this widely acclaimed bold gesture. When Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee announced the ceasefire initially in December, he did it with the sincere hope that our neighbour would respond and find a way to start bilateral talks to bring peace to Kashmir. Unfortunately, that state had only witnessed the killing of several civilians, and attacks on the police and security personnel whose duty is to ensure peace and tranquillity. The President regretted that Pakistan had failed to take advantage of India's sincerity.

It was only expected of the President to refer to the devastation in life and property suffered by Gujarat from the killer quake of January 26. He stressed the urgent need to set up a permanent National Disaster Management Authority to take care of all types of national calamities, like floods which have become a tragic phenomenon year after year in one part of the country or another, or acute drought and famine conditions.

Some of the highlights of the Presidential address that will be of closer interest to our readers are the government's intention to increase the number of seats in prestigious institutions like the IITs, to launch a new health policy to promote "health for all", and to pass the Women's Reservation Bill to bring in more women to the Parliament and state legislatures. If this comes about, we can be certain that children's interests will be in safe hands.

NEWS FLASH



"So vast... so big"

Munenori Ikegami of Japan does not know much of English, yet he tried to convey his wonderment on seeing the millions and millions of people who had gathered in Allahabad for the just concluded Kumbh Mela. He said the Gion Matsuri —Japan's biggest festival— would not come anywhere near the Kumbh, nor the millennium festival in South Africa or the festival of the aborigines in Australia, both of which he had filmed for his TV company. He was expecting his company to ask him to cover the Kumbh Mela. But he

was in for disappointment, so he resigned his job and came to India. Now back in his hometown, he is searching for a job while trying to sell the video film of the Kumbh he has taken. Whether he succeeds or not, he has decided on one thing: he will come back for the next Maha Kumbh in the year 2013. Ikegami had fortunately carried his handycam when he came to India in January.

Sorry, no cots!

In Poland, things are slightly different. People who fall ill and want to get treated in hospitals will now have to take their cots along with them! It is "house full" in many hospitals in most of the towns of Poland, and a large percentage of patients remain in hospitals for days together. Luckily, they have room enough to accommodate more cots, though they have to come from the homes of the patients!

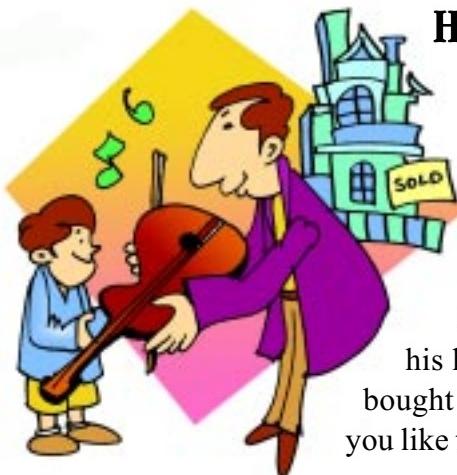


Ice hotel

From hospital to hotel, and this is Quebec City in North America. Imagine you are entering a hotel, but then it is made of some 250 tonnes of ice and 4,500 tonnes of snow. It overlooks St. Lawrence river and the Montmorency Waterfalls, which are higher than the Niagara Falls. The hotel has a bar, a cinema, and two art galleries full of north American scenes sculpted out of ice. The bedrooms have—guess—ice beds! No need to say, the food served will be topped with varieties of ice-creams. We are already into the Indian summer. If anyone of you wish to escape the heat, the best vacation will be out there—in the ice hotel.



How affectionate he is!



K.Y. Wong, a company executive in Bangkok, was quite impressed with his son Wong Yuuki's talents—the boy plays on the violin. He was quite keen on possessing a 200-year-old Lorenzo Storioni violin made in Italy. That should not be a problem, the father assured the son. Wong Sr. quietly sold his house in Singapore for 364,000 U.S. dollars, bought the violin, and gifted it to Wong Jr. How do you like that?

For your book of records

The longest painting—500 metres long and 80 cm wide—on the theme of world peace has been completed by 17,500 children hailing from 90 nations and studying in schools in the UAE. They worked on the long canvas for six months. The painting that cost Rs.40 lakh was presented to the President of UAE, Sheikh Sayeed Bin Sultan al-Nahyan.

A moment of pride

Before you read this piece, you might have seen on the TV, or read in the newspapers that our editorial adviser, Shri Manoj Das, was honoured by the nation when President K.R. Narayanan bestowed on him the title **Padma Shri**. It was a moment of pride for all of us at *Chandamama* and to thousands of our readers.

As we go to press, we are informed that he has been conferred with India's most prestigious award for creative writing — the Saraswati Samman.

Shri Manoj Das has been with this publication for the last thirty years, and has authored a variety of features and stories under his name and different pen names. He was also the Founder-Editor of Chandamama's sister publication, *The Heritage*.

Born in 1934 in an affluent family in Orissa, Manoj Das witnessed traumatic events early in life when he turned philosophical and questioned: Can man ever experience true happiness? No wonder, he was in due course of time drawn to Sri Aurobindo, the Mother, and the Ashram at Pondicherry where he settled down in 1963. He has since been a Professor at the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education.

A prolific writer in both Oriya and



English, Prof. Das made his foray into literature with a collection of poems in Oriya in 1949 when he was still in his teens.

He has a facile pen, and loves to write on India's incomparable heritage.

He is the recipient of several literary awards, the foremost among them being the Sahitya Akademi Award (1972), Sarala Award (1980), and Sahitya Bharati Award (1994). For some years, he was educational consultant to the government of Singapore.

In 1997, when *Chandamama* celebrated its Golden Jubilee, it published seven books, six of which came from Prof. Manoj Das.

The seventh book was penned by none other than Ruskin Bond, yet another versatile and popular writer, who is our other editorial adviser and who, too, was honoured with the **Padma Shri** in 1999.

Also born in 1934, Ruskin Bond spent his childhood in England and took to writing at an early age. He won many awards, including the Sahitya Akademi Award, and the Hans Christian Andersen Award, given to authors of children's books (1998).

He is particularly fond of writing on life in India, with mountains and rivers for a backdrop. *Chandamama* has been publishing his stories for the past one year.

We join our readers in congratulating Prof. Manoj Das and Mr. Ruskin Bond on their achievements and look forward to their writings and guidance for years to come. -Publisher





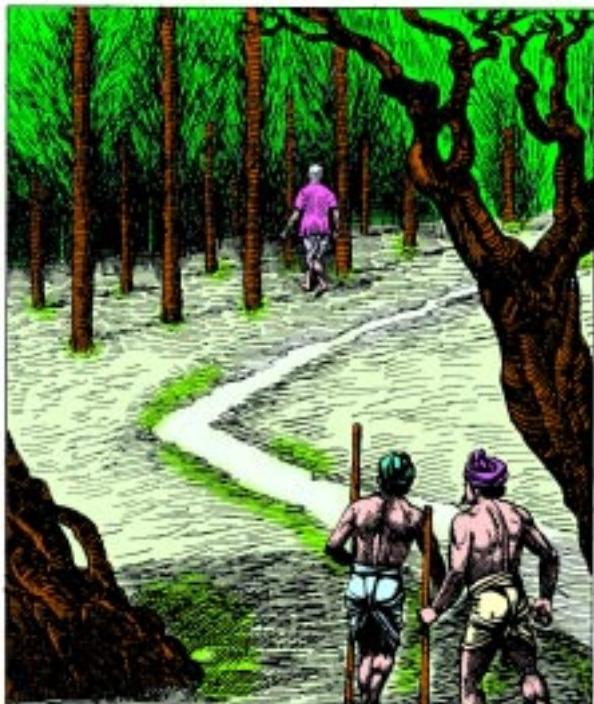
New tales of
King Vikram
and the Vetala

The Magic Necklace

Dark was the night and fearsome the atmosphere. Cracks of thunder were preceded by flashes of lightning, revealing weird faces. It rained from time to time. The howls of jackals were at times subdued by peals of eerie laughter.

But King Vikram did not swerve. He climbed the ancient tree again and brought down the corpse and threw it across his shoulders. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground, the vampire

that possessed the corpse said: "O King, are you taking all this pain in order to master some supernatural power? Well, to possess any such power might not be bad; thereby you'll be able to serve others. But that may not be free from risk. Bhimsingh had come to possess some such power. But what was the ultimate benefit? Let



me tell you his story. Pay close attention to it. That might bring you some relief from this dreary task."

The vampire went on: Bhimsingh was a farmer. He prospered through hard labour. One day, while levelling the ground, his shovel clanged against something hard that lay buried. Soon

he dug out a jar! He opened it and was surprised to find in it a gold necklace and a palm leaf with something inscribed on it.

He took them home and with some difficulty deciphered the inscription on the palm leaf. It recorded the strange story of a man who lived more than a century earlier. The man had received a magic necklace from a mendicant. By putting it on, he could know the secret thoughts of anyone whom he met.

He used this power to blackmail many wealthy persons and the king's officers who secretly nursed sinful or criminal desires. Soon he became very rich through the bribes he received from them. But one day, he happened to find out, by the virtue of the necklace, that his wife hated him and was in love with someone else. Mad with fury, he killed his wife. But soon he was overcome with remorse. He buried the necklace along with its unusual account and left for the forest to live the life of a hermit.

The discovery amazed Bhimsingh. Soon curiosity got the better of him. He put the necklace on, and strolled into the village.

He owed some money to a certain Lombu Singh, a relative of the landlord. As soon as he saw Lombu, he realised that the fellow was plotting to kill the landlord. He had employed

two ruffians who were to attack the landlord when he would be taking his daily evening stroll around his grove.

"But isn't our landlord a noble soul?" Bhimsingh muttered.

Lombu was taken aback and looked at Bhimsingh with suspicion and surprise. Bhimsingh was now sure of the virtue of the necklace, but did not say anything more.

He proceeded to the grove stealthily and saw the ruffians. Soon they sprang up in front of the landlord and raised their sticks. Instantly Bhimsingh jumped forward and brought down an iron rod on the ruffians. They fell down and groaned. Bhimsingh shouted to attract the villagers, and many came running. The ruffians confessed their design that was foiled. Lombu Singh had fled the village. The landlord gave Bhimsingh a big reward for saving his life.

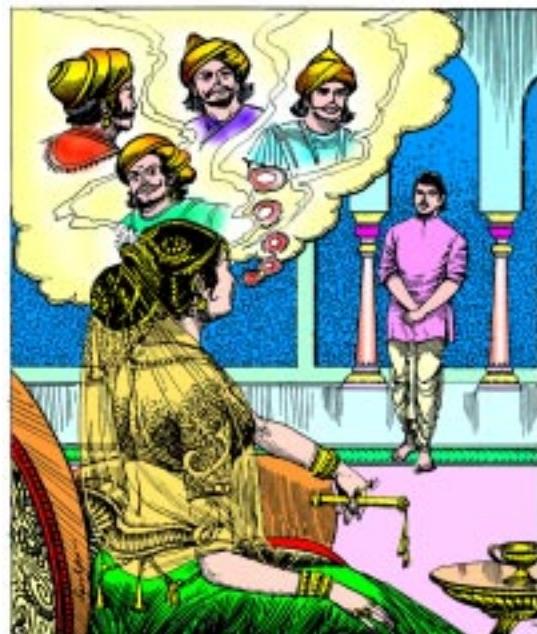
The landlord was never tired of praising Bhimsingh. By and by, the people knew that Bhimsingh had the power to read the minds of other people. But nobody knew how Bhimsingh acquired such power.

By the virtue of his magic necklace, Bhimsingh one day came to know that his neighbour's daughter Ratna loved him. He then proposed and her father gladly agreed. The two were married.

Once while talking to a group of well-dressed travellers, Bhimsingh was aware that they were in fact a

gang of bandits. He sent a word of intelligence to the king, and the gang was captured soon.

Many bad characters and desperadoes were thus caught and punished, and many sinister plots were foiled, thanks to Bhimsingh's mysterious powers. He grew famous. At the same time there was a threat to



his life. The criminals were waiting for a chance to kill him. However, he could save himself because he could know their plans in advance.

Noblemen and merchants employed Bhimsingh to find out the thoughts of those with whom they were concerned. Bhimsingh was in a dilemma, for, he found how ugly and dark were the thoughts of those who



were generally known to be important people in society. However, he grew very rich with the heavy remuneration he received from his clients.

One day, the king summoned him. “Can you tell me what thought is passing in my mind just now?”

“Your majesty, you are thinking that it won’t be possible for me to spell out your thought,” replied Bhimsingh. The king complimented him and appointed him a courtier. Bhimsingh now became more famous and richer. All the court officials paid him to let them know what the king thought about them!

One evening the king sent for him and asked him confidentially: “Do you know why I called you?”

“Yes, your majesty, you wish to know the mind of the queen!”

“Excellent. Now, go and meet the queen under the pretext of delivering this message to her and read her mind,” said the king, handing him a letter.

Bhimsingh took the letter to the queen. It contained nothing more than the information that a celebrated musician was expected to entertain them in the evening.

Looking at the queen, Bhimsingh realized that she did not have any love or respect for the king. Her thoughts were about several persons to whom she felt attracted.

However Bhimsingh on his return to the king, said: “Your majesty, the queen loves you very much.” The king was so happy that he gave him a gift of the most precious jewel he was wearing then.

Back at home, Bhimsingh strangely hurled the magic necklace into the fire. Instead of melting, it evaporated.

At night, Bhimsingh and his wife left the kingdom for a far away town.

The vampire paused and turned to King Vikramaditya: “Tell me, O King, why did Bhimsingh destroy the magic necklace? Wasn’t the necklace helping



Fear the danger as long as it has not arrived, but once it has come, one ought to do the needful (to come out of the situation without fearing it any longer).

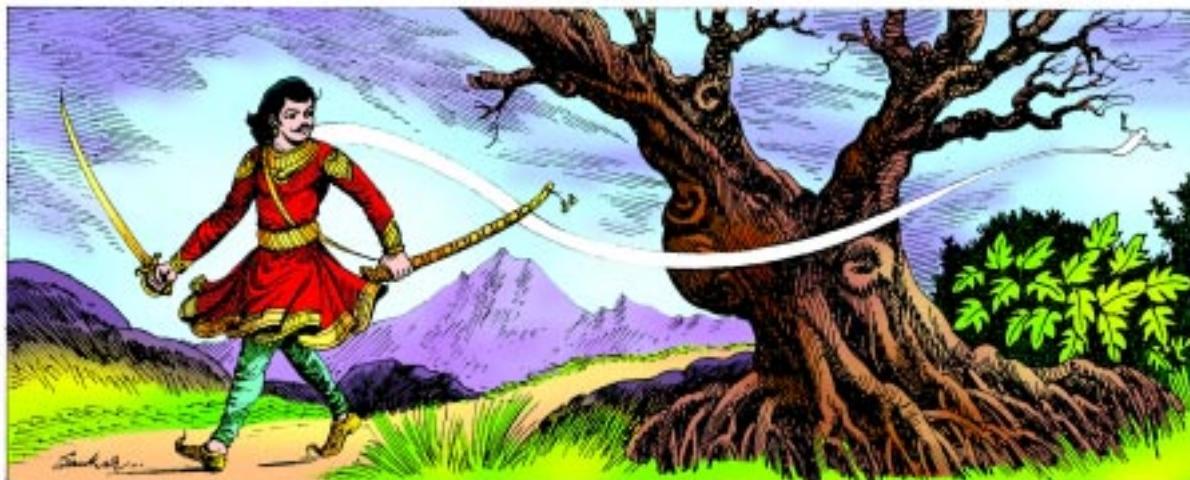
-*The Hitopadesha*

him as well as others? Why did he leave the kingdom? Answer me, O King, if you can. If you keep mum though you may know the answer, your head would roll off your neck. Beware!"

The king answered forthwith: "Bhimsingh was a good-natured man. He made proper use of the power the necklace gave him as long as he could. But a stage came when he knew it was not possible for him to use the power and remain good at the same time forever. It was not enough to be good to exercise a special power; one had to be mentally strong, too. Both the qualities may not be found together in any person. Bhimsingh had no strong

will power to give a shock to the king by telling him the truth he knew; at the same time he felt miserable for having told a lie to the king. He, therefore, decided to give up his power. He had to leave the kingdom, because the king and the others would continue to expect his service and they would only get annoyed if he did not oblige them. Besides, in the absence of the necklace, he would not know if somebody intended to harm him."

No sooner had the king concluded his answer than the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip. Vikramaditya drew his sword and went after the vampire.



Stories from other lands (Africa)

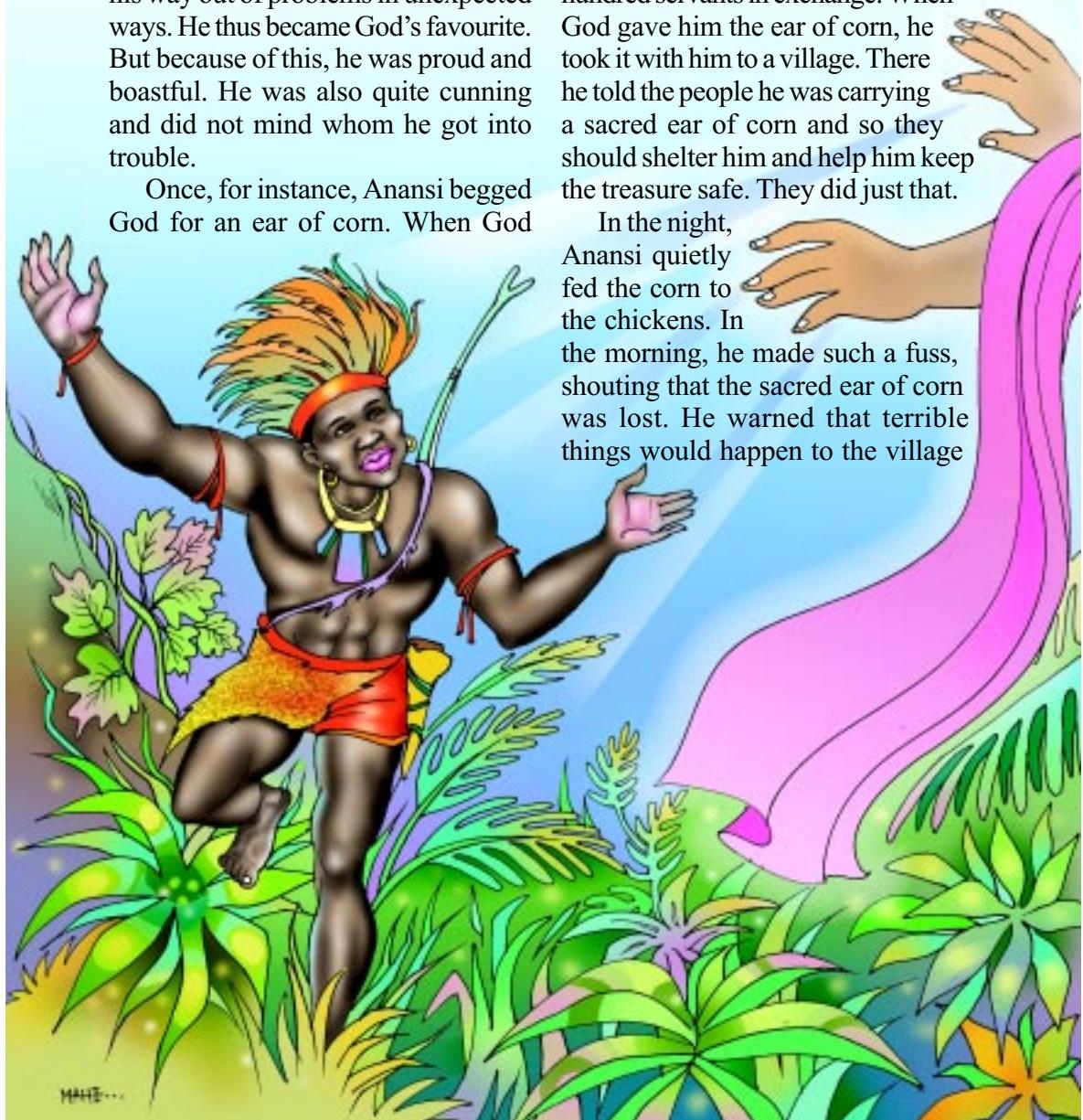
How Anansi became a spider

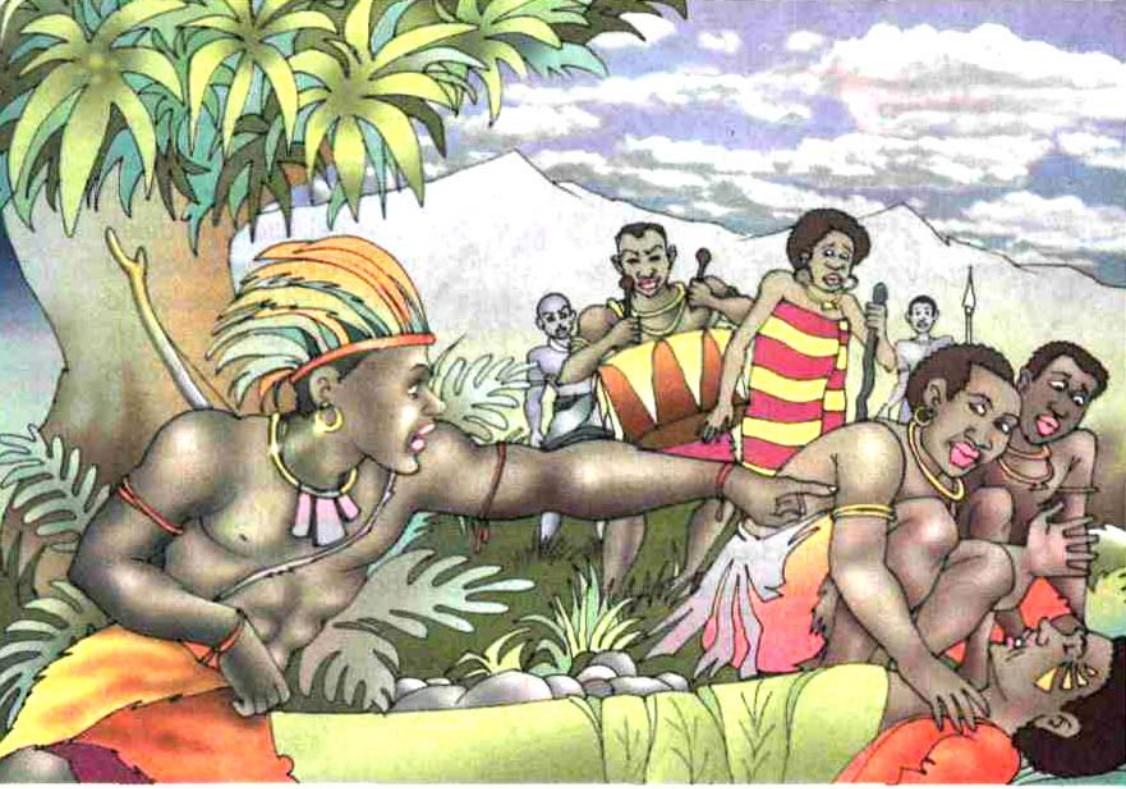
Anansi amused God because he was quite resourceful and managed to work his way out of problems in unexpected ways. He thus became God's favourite. But because of this, he was proud and boastful. He was also quite cunning and did not mind whom he got into trouble.

Once, for instance, Anansi begged God for an ear of corn. When God

asked him why he wanted one, he said he would then be able to get himself a hundred servants in exchange. When God gave him the ear of corn, he took it with him to a village. There he told the people he was carrying a sacred ear of corn and so they should shelter him and help him keep the treasure safe. They did just that.

In the night, Anansi quietly fed the corn to the chickens. In the morning, he made such a fuss, shouting that the sacred ear of corn was lost. He warned that terrible things would happen to the village





and the villagers because the corn had been stolen in their village.

The poor villagers got so scared that they gave him a bushel of corn to make up for the loss and quickly sent him on his way. Anansi similarly exchanged the corn for a chicken and the chicken for some sheep and the sheep for the body of a dead man that some villagers were taking to be buried.

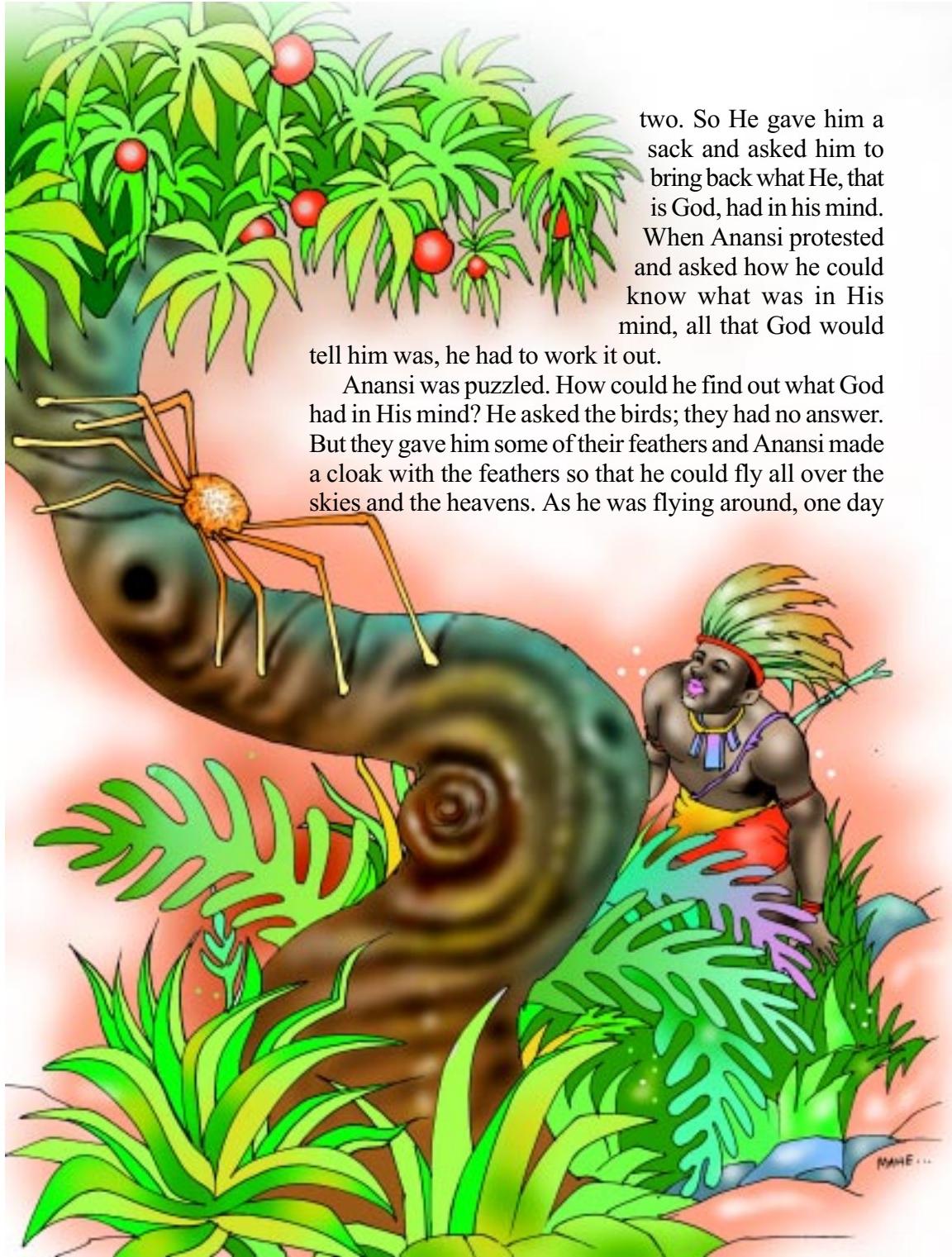
At the last village, he claimed that the dead body was that of the Son of God and he was sleeping. He asked everyone to be very quiet so that his sleep would not be disturbed. The next morning Anansi claimed that he could not wake up the Son of God and asked for their help. First, the people beat on their drums, then they banged on all

the pots and pans in the village and finally, when none of it seemed to work, they pounded on the chest of the body. Then Anansi set up a howl. "You've killed the Son of God!! Now what will I tell him? He'll be so angry and all his wrath will fall on your heads."

The poor, terrified villagers told Anansi he could take a hundred of their finest men instead and give them to God, so that He would not get angry with them.

Anansi now went back to God with the hundred servants he had promised him.

After this, Anansi was unbearable. So arrogant and uppity did he get. Even God got tired of him and decided that he needed to be taken down a peg or



two. So He gave him a sack and asked him to bring back what He, that is God, had in his mind. When Anansi protested and asked how he could know what was in His mind, all that God would

tell him was, he had to work it out.

Anansi was puzzled. How could he find out what God had in His mind? He asked the birds; they had no answer. But they gave him some of their feathers and Anansi made a cloak with the feathers so that he could fly all over the skies and the heavens. As he was flying around, one day

he overheard some of God's attendants talking. One of them said: "It serves that proud Anansi right. God has sent him on an impossible mission. He cannot know that God wants him to get the sun and moon for Him in the sack."

Anansi was thrilled. Now he felt he could outwit God Himself. He went to the Python who was considered the wisest being in the forest and asked him how he could capture the sun and the moon in his sack. The Python sent him to the West where the sun sets and asked him to wait there and capture him when he rested. He told

him he could find the moon in the East at the same time and could get him before he was fully awake. Anansi took his advice and managed to catch the sun and the moon in his sack and took them to God.

God was most surprised and amazed that Anansi had managed to carry out the impossible mission. He was so pleased that he made Him his chief on Earth.

Now, of course, there was no containing Anansi. He was swollen up with pride and importance. One day, he was swaggering along the forest, when he saw a fine ram. He knew that it was God's ram, and he managed to kill it. Then he stopped short. He knew that he had gone too far. God would surely not forgive him for killing His ram. He wondered whom he could

blame for the killing. Then he got an idea. He tied up the dead ram with ropes and hid it in a tree.

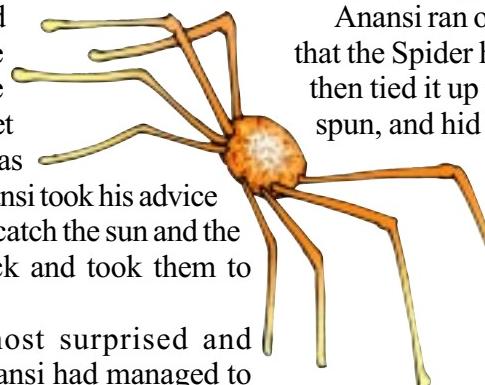
Then he went to the Spider and said, "This tree has many good fruits. I'll share them with you. I'll wait below and collect the fruits while you shake the tree and we can then share them." The poor, unsuspecting Spider fell into the trap and went up to shake the tree. When he shook it, the ram fell out. And Anansi set up an uproar saying God's ram had been killed and the Spider had done it. Poor Spider was too confused to say anything.

Anansi ran off to God and told him that the Spider had killed His ram and then tied it up with ropes that he had spun, and hid it in the tree. God was at first very angry. Then his wife asked Him how the Spider, who was so small, could kill such a big ram. Also the threads that the

Spider wove were too fine to tie up such a big ram. God then realised that Anansi was up to his old tricks. He got very angry with him and pushed him down to Earth. Anansi fell down so hard he broke into little pieces and became a spider.

He did not really learn his lesson after that though, and continued to play his tricks on unsuspecting people till a young girl got the better of him. But that is another story.

- Ruma



Saga of India

Glimpses of a great civilisation – its glorious quest for Truth through the ages



15. Keeping the Promise



Friends of Sandip and Chameli pressed around their grandfather, pleading that they, too, had a share of the joy of listening to stories. “Today I shall tell you of the tests a great king had to face,” Professor Devanath said happily, as he led his small audience to the nearby park.

“And today we build a bridge between time past and time present, remembering some of the characters and episodes belonging to a remote past, but the values they exemplified are as precious today as they were once upon a time. Since you already know about

King Trisanku, I shall continue with his son, King Harishchandra. And strangely, Viswamitra is the common factor between the two kings! The only difference is, while Viswamitra was so kind to Trisanku, he proved quite unkind to Harishchandra.”

The professor then went on with the narration:

This happened before Viswamitra learnt about Sage Vasishtha’s great compassion for him. Viswamitra, despite his spiritual attainments, had not yet got over his one great weakness, his envy towards Vasishtha. It is this

that worked havoc in the life of Harishchandra.

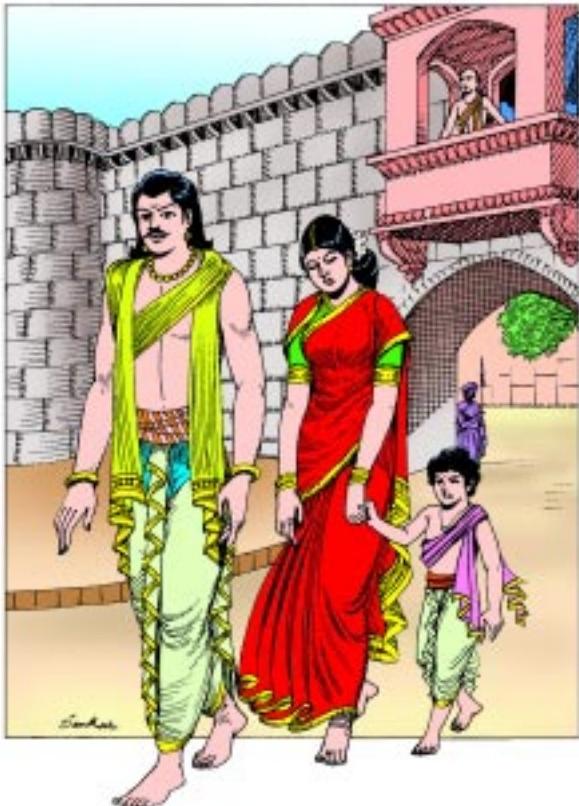
Once, in an assembly of gods and seers, greater respect was shown to Vasishtha than to Viswamitra. The immediate cause of it, as Viswamitra found out, was Harishchandra, the King of Ayodhya, who had successfully performed an extraordinary yajna, under the guidance of his family priest, Vasishtha. It was known as Rajasuya. Only a king who was totally consecrated to truth, who never went back on his word, could perform this.

Was Harishchandra that noble and truthful? wondered Viswamitra and he decided to subject Harishchandra to some difficult test. As the king passed one test, the sage placed before him yet another.

It began like this. The sage, by his magic power, changed a demon into a boar and directed it to destroy Harishchandra's lovely garden. The beast was so powerful and ferocious that the king's soldiers were unable to scare it away. He was informed of it. He rode a horse and chased the boar. It would every now and then disappear and reappear.

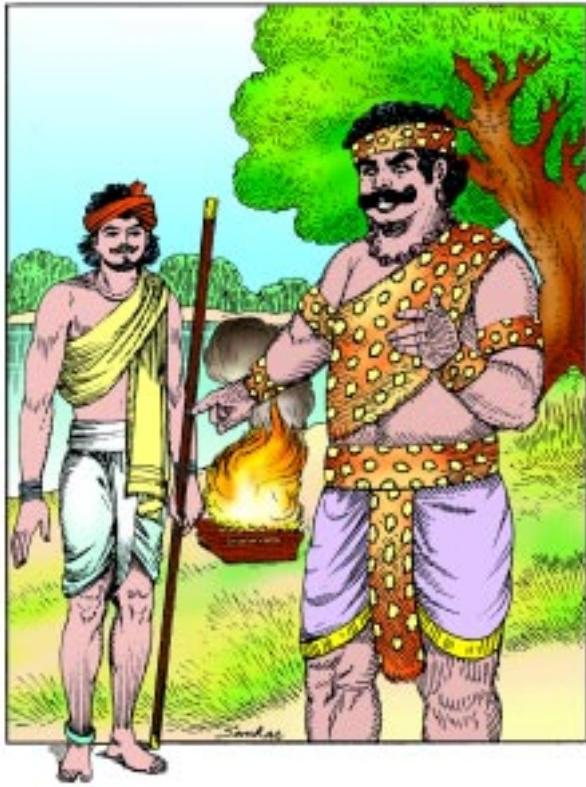
The king was surprised, but he did not give up the chase. By and by the boar led him into the deeper part of the forest and then finally disappeared.

The king felt tired; he quenched his



thirst from a river, and as he relaxed on a rock, an old Brahmin met him and spoke to him very kindly. The king was happy that he had met a good man in that wilderness. He introduced himself and asked the Brahmin if he needed anything. He said his son was about to get married and he would like to have enough wealth and property to ensure the couple's happiness.

The king promised to give him anything he desired and asked him to meet him the next day. The Brahmin was none other than Viswamitra in disguise. He met the king as advised and demanded the entire kingdom along with the palace and all its wealth. The king was horrified. He



stood calm and assured the Brahmin that his demand was granted.

But Viswamitra was however, bent upon driving the king to a point where he could not but fail to pass the test. "My dear king, it is good of you to keep your promise. But, what about my Dakshina?" he asked.

Now, *Dakshina* was a sort of supplementary donation. Since the king had already given away everything he possessed, he could not fulfil the Brahmin's demand immediately. However, he promised to complete the deal at the earliest and left for Varanasi with Queen Chandramati and their son, Rohitashwa.

At Varanasi the Brahmin appeared before them and spoke harsh words

and threatened to curse the king if he did not make the payment. Chandramati proposed that she be sold as a slave and the money given to the Brahmin. The person who bought her was none other than Viswamitra himself, in another disguise. He also bought Rohitashwa.

Even then the money was not sufficient to fulfil Viswamitra's demand. Separated from the queen and the prince, the king walked the streets, loudly announcing that he was willing to be bought as a slave.

A person who owned the cremation ground on the holy Ganga bought him. The amount he gave ultimately satisfied Viswamitra.

Harishchandra's duty was to guard the cremation ground and to arrange for the burning of corpses. He had to take a fee from all those who came to perform the rite. The money was to be handed to his master.

Days passed. Chandramati, who worked as a servant was treated brutally by her master.

Her patience faced the greatest challenge when, one day, Rohit died after he was bitten by a snake. She was not allowed to see his body till she had completed her chores. She carried the body to the cremation ground. It was a cloudy night. She somehow found her way with the help of the flashes of lightning. Once there,

she was asked to pay the fee fixed for the rite. And who was demanding it? Her husband, Harishchandra!

While Chandramati pleaded for mercy as she was unable to make any payment, the guard proved stubborn. However, their voices revealed their identity to each other. Both cried bitterly and Chandramati fainted. They decided to put an end to their own lives by jumping into the pyre of their son.

The pyre was made ready. Rohit's body was laid on it. It was lit, too. But a crack of thunder was followed by a luminous light as the king and the queen were about to jump into the fire. Dazed for a moment, they soon saw their beloved son standing before them alive and smiling. The Brahmin, who was the queen's tormentor, now revealed himself as Viswamitra. Gods in their splendour, along with the

owner of the cremation ground who was none other than Dharma, were there, too, all singing Harishchandra's glory.

Once again Viswamitra realized that Vasishtha was right in bestowing his favours on Harishchandra. He admitted to the king's greatness and restored his kingdom and his palace to him and led them to Ayodhya.

"My children," said Grandpa in conclusion, "the story makes us conscious of the great capacity man has for standing up to challenges, for the sake of truth. For hundreds of years the story of Harishchandra has moved the hearts of generations of men and women. They have wept with the king and the queen, but have also felt reassured that man emerges purer and stronger out of every ordeal."

- Visvavasu
(To continue)



BORN THIS MONTH

The soft, soothing strains of *Bhavayami Raghuramam* sung by M. S. Subbulakshmi, one of our renowned classical singers, enchant listeners even today, long, long after it was composed. Who composed it?

This and many other classical songs were composed by Maharaja Svati Tirunal, a great music composer.

Svati Tirunal was born on April 16, 1813 in Tiruvananthapuram, in the royal family of Travancore, now part of Kerala. It is said the Maharaja was very worried because he did not have any male heir. When his sister was pregnant, he declared that her baby, when it was born, would become the next Maharaja. Well, this baby was Svati Tirunal. As he was declared a king even before his birth, he came to be known as *Garbhasriman* (king before birth). He was named Rama Varma and he also bore the hereditary title, *Kulasekhara*. But he was popularly called Svati Tirunal after the star Svati he was born under.

On April 21, 1829, when he was 17 years old, Svati Tirunal was crowned Maharaja. He proved to be a wise and able administrator. He built India's first observatory, public library, and munsiff's courts. He introduced the revenue survey and census. He was also responsible for promoting allopathic medicines and the study of English in schools. What's more,



MAHARAJA SVATI TIRUNAL

he excelled in music, literature, arts, and philosophy! His reign is considered the golden era of art and music in Kerala.

However, his love for the arts and music also put him in a lot of difficulties. General Cullen, the British Resident of the state, disapproved of his expenditure on promoting arts and music. He began interfering in the administration of the state. Svati kept him at bay as long as he could; later he detached himself from the affairs of the state, devoting himself to music and religion. He died on December 25, 1846.

Svati Tirunal composed about 400 songs in Sanskrit, Malayalam, Hindustani, Telugu, and Kannada. Most of his songs are devotional.

This royal composer's contribution to Indian music in his short life is beyond comparison. His sweet compositions continue to charm generations of music lovers.

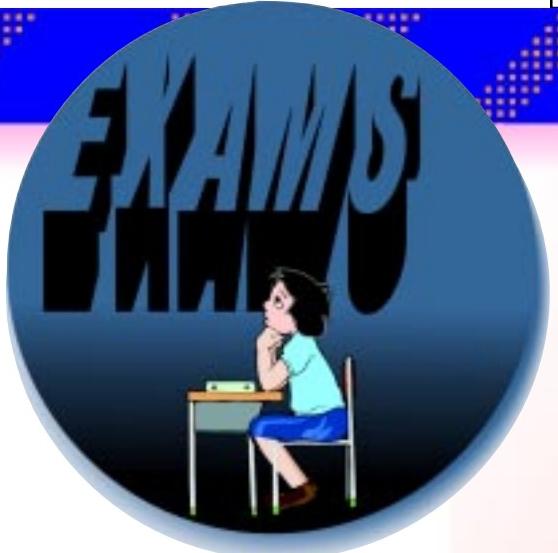
HOW TO DRIVE AWAY EXAM BLUES

"Your final examinations start next month," said Mrs. Lata Shankar. "Remember to study your maps carefully."

Dead silence filled the class. Suddenly, life seemed serious and full of care. Mira's palms started sweating, her heart raced, and she felt like crying. She wanted to run away, far away from exams and books and difficult subjects.

Mira didn't like exams. They made her feel sick. She didn't mind writing essays, preparing worksheets, or working on projects. But at the very word exams, she could feel her stomach churning, and the sick feeling rise up her gullet. She seemed to forget everything she had ever read or learnt.

On exam days, her classroom seemed so strange and frightening.



Her normally fun-loving school-mates looked tense and remote. The teachers were pre-occupied and distant. No one smiled. Then, when Mira got the question paper, she went all cold and hot and could barely read what was printed on it. Even when she had studied hard for the exam, she felt she did not do as well as she could have.

How do **you** feel when exams are announced? Do you feel panicky like Mira? Do you wish that you didn't have to do exams or there weren't any exams at all?

CODE OF PERSISTENCE

1. I will never give up so long as I know I am right.
2. I will believe that all things will work out for me if I hang on until the end.
3. I will be courageous and undismayed in the face of odds.
4. I will not permit anyone to intimidate me or deter me from my goals.
5. I will fight to overcome all physical handicaps and setbacks.
6. I will try again and again and yet again to accomplish what I desire.
7. I will take new faith and resolution from the knowledge that all successful men and women have had to fight defeat and adversity.
8. I will never surrender to discouragement or despair no matter what seeming obstacles may confront me.

-Herman Sherman

Exam fever catches on

When do you feel afraid? When people around you are afraid, you tend to feel afraid. One of the reasons why many students feel afraid of exams is because their friends are afraid. This feeling is catching like 'flu or a cold and makes you feel just as sick.

The other reason for exam fear is, of course, that you may feel you haven't studied your lessons well enough and may not be able to answer the questions in the exam. Yet, there is no reason to be so afraid.

Mahesh and the work mountain

Mahesh found out on Thursday that he had a test on the following Monday on a topic in Maths they had been studying for two weeks. He had done some of the sums, but there were many he didn't know how to do. He had often done his homework while he had his eyes glued on the TV and had not bothered to check his homework when he got them back. Sometimes, in fact, he had just copied his homework from a friend and handed it in.

On Sunday night he decided to study. He thought he could solve all the sums in the unit once. But when he sat down to start work, it suddenly seemed like a mountain to climb. The sums were not very easy and it took him all evening to do at least a third of them. He sat up to do as much as he could, but found he couldn't even solve the sums he knew because he felt so sleepy. The later it got, the more he panicked at the number of sums still left to do. His mother finally sent him to bed saying he wouldn't be able to get up for school the next morning. He was so very upset the next day that he couldn't do quite a few sums in the test. He decided that he would study hard and well for the final



examinations and not get caught in that kind of a mess again.

If you postpone studying everything to the last minute, you will find that you do not know or understand all that you have to study. The temptation, then, is to cram all your lessons. It is difficult to remember what you cram at the last minute and so, in the examination, you tend to panic and make things worse. The only fail proof way is to study regularly.



Here are some tips to help you



Over the whole year

- Pay attention in class
- Keep your notes and class work up to date
- Do all your assignments

Then, just before the exams, you will only need to read your notes, the chapter summaries, and the questions given in your books and your class worksheets. You will find that you can answer most of the questions, because all the material will be familiar to you.



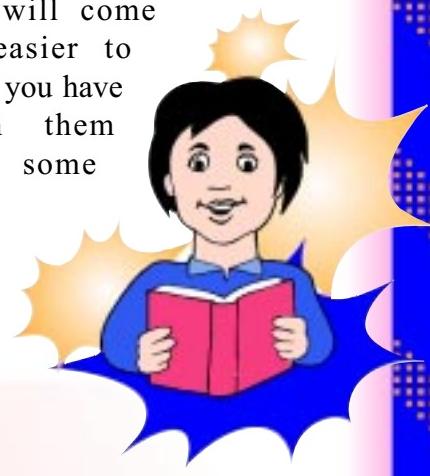
Before the final exams

- Start your revision about a month ahead
- Make a revision plan – use a planner
- Allot time in the planner for all subjects
- Revise all topics at least once

How to revise

- Read through all the material once
- Make sure you understand concepts
- Make summaries of the main topics
- Find out the normal question paper pattern
- Do practice tests keeping to time
- Work out answers; don't just learn them by heart.

Then, in the days before the exam, read over your notes carefully and try to answer the review questions in writing. Your hand has its own memory and the answers will come back easier to mind if you have written them down some time.



The night before the exam

- ❑ Don't cram at the last minute
- ❑ Go over your summaries
- ❑ Eat a good dinner - relax
- ❑ Go to bed early

This is not the time to learn new facts or skills. By now, you have studied your lessons or you haven't. Frantic cramming will only exhaust and scare you. It is much better to relax and get a good night's sleep.

At the exam

- ❑ Keep calm
- ❑ Read all the questions and instructions carefully
- ❑ Allot the time you want to spend on each question; keep some time for revision
- ❑ Answer all the questions you know

❑ Then look at the questions you don't know. Read the questions you don't know once or twice calmly and think about the chapter or topic they deal with. The answer will most probably come to you then.

- ❑ Don't spend too much time on any one question
- ❑ Check your answers carefully; revise for spelling and grammar if you have some spare time.



Best
Luck!

WORDS TO REMEMBER

The dictionary is the only place where success comes before work. Hard work is the price we must pay for success. I think you can accomplish almost anything if you're willing to pay the price - Vince Lombardi.

Ability is what you are capable of doing. Motivation determines what you do. Attitude determines how well you do it. - Lou Holtz.

Excellence is the gradual result of always striving to do better. - Pat Riley.

Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in and day out.

- Robert Collier.

India in the 20th century

4. A vibrant democracy in action 1977-2000

The Emergency promulgated in 1975 cast its shadow on the Parliamentary Elections in February-March 1977, when a non-Congress government was voted to power ending 30 years of uninterrupted rule

by that party. The Congress (O), Bharatiya Lok Dal, Jan Sangh, and the Socialist Party merged to form the Janata Party, with Morarji Desai as Chairman.

Former minister Jagjivan Ram resigned from the Congress and founded the Democratic Congress which came to an understanding with the Janata Party. In the elections held between February 16 and March 10, the

Janata Party and its allies secured a majority. Indira Gandhi lost her Rai Bareilly seat. On March 21, Emergency was withdrawn. On March 24, Morarji Desai assumed office as Prime Minister.

The anti-Congress wave was also evident in ten states and two Union Territories.

On June 21, N.Sanjeeva Reddy became the sixth President of India.

Several younger members walked out of the Congress Party forcing Indira Gandhi to resign from the Working Committee. In 1978 non-Congress parties wrested power in Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, and Maharashtra.



N. Sanjeeva Reddy

Morarji Desai



First coalition ministry

On July 11, 1979 the Opposition moved a no-confidence motion against the Morarji Desai ministry. He resigned on July 15. Deputy Prime Minister Charan Singh left the Janata Party and was elected leader of the Janata (Secular) group in the Parliament. On July 28 he

formed India's first coalition ministry. However, it had a short life; on August 20, Charan Singh resigned. The President dissolved the Lok Sabha.

In the elections to the seventh Lok Sabha held between January 2 and 6, 1980, Indira Gandhi staged a come-back to power with a thumping majority. The Congress (I) secured 353 of the 524 seats. On January 14, Indira Gandhi took over as Prime Minister. The Congress (I) also returned to power in Karnataka, Goa, Arunachal Pradesh, and Himachal Pradesh, and joined other parties to form ministries in Pondicherry, Manipur, Haryana, and

Nagaland. Elections May saw the Congress (I) obtaining two-thirds majority in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, and Uttar Pradesh, and a simple majority in Maharashtra and Punjab.

Meanwhile, on April 6 the Bharatiya Janata Party had come into being. Atal Behari Vajpayee was chosen President.

India made a major achievement when a 21-member scientific team led by S.Z. Qasim, who had gone on an Antarctica expedition, set foot on the icy continent on January 9, 1982. During its stay there for nearly a month, the team put up a research station naming it Dakshin Gangotri.



Zail Singh



Indira Gandhi

On July 25, 1982, Sardar Zail Singh became the seventh President of India.

On the death of Sheikh Abdullah, who



had once again become Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir after the 1977 elections, his son Farooq Abdullah was chosen for the post in September 1982.

Farooq Abdullah Trouble started in Punjab when the Akali Dal organised a "rasta roko" to obstruct all movement on road and rail on April 3, 1983. The Dal also announced its intention to form a 100,000 strong 'army' to carry on the agitation. A militant called Jarnail Singh Bhindranwala unleashed violence against two communities. He took refuge in the Golden Temple complex in



Amritsar. The Centre's offer of talks was rejected by the Akali Dal President Harchand Singh Longowal.

- ◆ Mehr Moos became the first Indian woman to reach Antarctica in 1977.

Elsewhere in the world ...

- ❖ The Conservative Party came back to power in Britain when the Tories led by Margaret Thatcher won the elections on



Margaret Thatcher

May 4, 1979 with a 43-seat majority over the Labour Party. She became the first woman Prime Minister in the whole of Europe.

- ❖ Nearly 60 nations, led by the USA, boycotted the 1980 Moscow Olympics to mark their protest against the continued presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan. India regained the Olympic gold in hockey on July 29.

- The World Health Assembly in May 1977 announced "Health for all by 2000".

Youngest Prime Minister

The year 1983 saw the formation of new political fronts. On October 8, the Lok Dal and Bharatiya Janata Party came together to form the National Democratic Alliance. Atal Behari Vajpayee was elected Chairman.

In September, the United Front had come into existence, with the Janata Party, Congress (S), Democratic Socialist Party, and the Rashtriya Congress as partners. The President of the Janata Party, Chandrasekhar, was elected Chairman of the Front.

The Punjab politics escalated during the first days of 1984. The Centre's call to Bhindranwala and other militants holed up in the Golden Temple to surrender went unheeded. The All India Sikh Students Union was banned. In May, the Akalis demanded withdrawal of the armed forces which had surrounded the Golden Temple. They also wanted the establishment of an autonomous state called Khalistan. The army launched what came to be called Operation Bluestar. In the exchange of fire,

Bhindranwala and Amrik Singh, President of the Students Federation, lost their lives.

The action against the Sikhs had great repercussions in the country. On October 31, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi fell to the bullets of two Sikh security guards on duty at her official residence. Her son Rajiv Gandhi, who was the General Secretary of the Congress, rushed back from Calcutta to be sworn in as Prime Minister.

The next two days witnessed a carnage in Delhi and some other places in north India, where anti-Sikh riots had broken out. In Delhi alone more than 2,000 Sikh men, women, and children were massacred.

In December, elections to the Lok Sabha were held in all states, except Punjab and Assam. Out of 504 seats, 401 went in favour of the Congress (!)—a record majority in Lok Sabha elections. On December 31, Rajiv Gandhi was elected Prime Minister. He was only 40 years.

India made a foray into space



Rajiv Gandhi



Rakesh Sharma

when Squadron Leader Rakesh Sharma, of the Indian Air Force, joined a Soviet crew of cosmonauts, went up in Soyuz T-11 on April 4, 1984, and returned after a week in space. He became the first Indian—incidentally the 138th in the world—to experience an adventure in space.

- ◆ India launched Bhaskara-1, an indigenously made artificial satellite, from a Soviet cosmodrome on June 7, 1979.



Prakash Padukone

- ◆ India's Prakash Padukone became the World Badminton Champion in London (1979).
- ◆ The Mahatma Gandhi bridge across river Ganga at Patna was opened on March 2, 1982. The 5.575 km bridge is the longest in the world.

Elsewhere in the world ...

- ❖ A milestone in space travel was reached when the USA launched the first space shuttle Columbia, which went up riding piggy-back on a rocket, flew like an aeroplane, and came back to land like a glider in April 1981.
- ❖ On March 23, 1983, in a nation-wide broadcast, US President Ronald Reagan



Ronald Reagan

announced the start of the Star Wars programme. The objective was to build a shield over the country against any nuclear attack. The programme envisaged building up the stockpile of nuclear warheads.

Patch-up in Punjab

The Bhopal gas tragedy of December 3, 1984 will be remembered by the world for a long time. A little after midnight, lethal gas started leaking from a factory manufacturing insecticide. Bhopal, the capital of Madhya Pradesh, soon turned into a gas chamber. More than 3,000 people lost their lives. Thousands of people fled their homes. Some of those taken to hospitals were disabled for life.

After Operation Bluestar, which the Sikh community had not taken kindly to, the Centre was eager to find ways and means of conciliation. On July 24, 1985 Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Sant Longowal signed the historic Punjab peace accord. Longowal, who was mediating between the community and the government, had alienated himself to the Sikhs. While addressing a congregation near Sangrur on August 20, he was shot dead by some pro-Khalistan fundamentalists who were protesting the Punjab accord. Elections were held in September. The United Akali Dal called upon the people to boycott the elections, but a splinter group decided to participate in the poll exercise. The Akali Dal secured 73 seats and the Congress (I) 32.

Surjit Singh Barnala was chosen Chief Minister.

India enacted the Anti-Defection Law in 1985 to prevent defections by members of parliament and assemblies. This historic measure in the history of Indian democracy came into effect from January 30, 1985.

India's eighth President R. Venkata-raman took office on July 25, 1986.

Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram, which were hitherto Union Territories, became full-fledged states on February 20, 1987.

On May 30, Goa became the 25th state of the Indian Union. The former Portuguese possessions, Daman and Diu, were merged and continued to be administered by the Centre.

In view of the escalating ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi visited Colombo and signed a pact with President Jayawardane on July 29, 1987. It was decided that India would send a peace-keeping force to Sri Lanka,



R. Venkataranam



and elections to the Northeastern Provincial Council, where the Tamils are in a majority, would be conducted under India's supervision. Meanwhile, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) had been formed under the leadership of V. Prabhakaran who had come out of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF). The Tigers engaged the Sri Lankan army in guerrilla warfare. The IPKF remained in Sri Lanka for two years.

- ◆ Mother Teresa, who founded the Missionaries of Charity in Calcutta in 1950, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize on October 17, 1979. She was honoured with India's highest civilian award, Bharat Ratna, in January 1980.



Mother Teresa

Elsewhere in the world ...

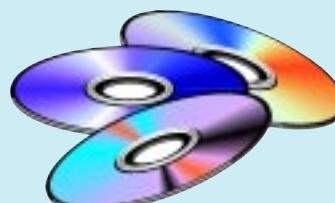
- ❖ In 1985, President Mikhail Gorbachev, in an attempt to reform the Soviet system of governance, introduced some popular measures. One was *glasnost* or open approach, and another, *perestroika* or reconstruction, both of which



Mikhail Gorbachev

resulted in decentralisation and limited free market. He also discussed with US President Ronald Reagan the advisability of controlling the race for arms.

- Compact discs (CD) were first introduced in West Germany in 1978.



Governments come and go

In the elections to the ninth Lok Sabha in November 1989, no single party could secure a majority. The Congress (I) got only 193 seats. The Janata Dal secured 141 seats, BJP 88, and the CPM 32. On November 29, Rajiv Gandhi submitted his resignation. The National Front

staked its claim to form a government. On December 1, the Parliamentary parties of the Janata Dal and National Front chose V.P.Singh as their leader. Parties like the CPM, CPI, RSP, Forward Bloc

and BJP extended support from outside. On December 2, V.P.Singh was sworn in as Prime Minister.

The government, acting upon the recommendations of the Mandal Commission on behalf of those who are socially and educationally backward, decided to reserve 27 per cent posts in government undertakings for such people. This provoked protests from college as well as school students some of whom committed self-immolation. The government closed all

educational institutions for a month in August 1990. The agitation, which began in Delhi, soon spread to other states.

On November 5, the Janata Dal split; some 70 MPs elected Chandrasekhar as leader. Meanwhile, the BJP had announced withdrawal of its support to the government. The Congress (I) MPs offered support to Chandrasekhar. V.P.Singh resigned when he lost the confidence vote in the Lok Sabha. On November 10, Chandrasekhar took office as India's eighth Prime Minister.

The Chandrasekhar government, too, was short-lived. The Congress (I) withdrew its support, and when his ministry was reduced to a minority in the Lok Sabha, he submitted his resignation on March 6, 1991.

Elections to the tenth Lok Sabha were held in two phases. The first phase was over by May 20. During the course of his election tour, former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi reached Tamil Nadu on May 21.



V.P. Singh



Chandrasekhar



P.V. Narasimha Rao

He was expected to address a rally in Sriperumbudur, a suburb of Chennai. On his way to the venue, he was killed in an explosion triggered by a woman LTTE suicide bomber. The second phase, which was postponed by 20 days, was held in June. By the time the results were announced, the Congress (I) and allied parties had secured 220 seats. P. V. Narasimha Rao was elected leader of the Congress Parliamentary group and he assumed office as Prime Minister on June 21.

◆ Melody queen Lata Mangeshkar earned an entry in the 1984 edition of the *Guinness Book of World Records* for having sung more than 25,000 songs in 20 Indian languages.



Elsewhere in the world ...

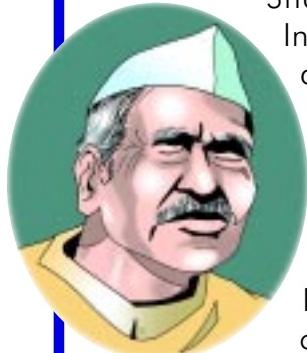
- ❖ The world's greatest nuclear tragedy came about when one of the four reactors in the Chernobyl Atomic Center in the Soviet Union caught fire following an explosion on April 26, 1986. The smoke containing atomic particles spread over several countries in Europe. The fall-out was detected even in India.
- ❖ What was subsequently called the Gulf War started when Iraq's army overran Kuwait in August 1990. The Arab League countries demanded the withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait. On an appeal by Saudi Arabia, the USA went to war with Iraq which ordered a ceasefire by the end of February 1991.

- A firm in Sweden introduced the first ever cellular telephones (1979).



Disputes over a mosque and a dam

Vice-President Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma became India's ninth President on July 17, 1992.



Shankar Dayal
Sharma

The controversy over the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh reached a climax on December 6, 1992 when some *kar sevaks* (volunteers) began demolishing the domes of the mosque. The dispute was whether there was a temple dedicated to Lord Rama existing at that spot earlier and whether it had been destroyed during the Mughal invasion for building a mosque. The Ayodhya incident sent shock-waves through the lengths and breadths of the country where communal clashes took place in the following days. Nearly a thousand people were believed to have been killed within one week. A fall-out of the incident was the dismissal of the BJP ministries in U.P., Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Himachal Pradesh.

Maharashtra experienced an earthquake of a fairly high intensity

in 1993. The districts of Latur and Osmanabad were badly affected. Nearly 10,000 persons lost their lives.

An agitation of a different nature was seen in Maharashtra which objected to Gujarat's attempt to raise the height of the Sardar Sarovar Dam on river Narmada. Environmentalists apprehended large-scale devastation of forest wealth in Maharashtra and a threat to human habitation and life. In August 1993, following certain assurances by the Maharashtra government, especially about the rehabilitation of those who might be displaced, the agitation was suspended.

There was no abatement in terrorist violence in Jammu and Kashmir, where President's rule was extended for another six months in 1994. India opposed a move by Pakistan in the International Human Rights Commission to move a resolution on Kashmir on February 26. India rejected the proposal for mediation.

The militants in Kashmir struck tourists and kidnapped six foreigners from Pahalgam in July 1995. In return for their freedom, they demanded the release of 17 terrorists kept in Indian jails. The government

Elsewhere in the world ...

rejected the demand saying that except two, the others were not Kashmiris but mercenaries from Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Earlier on May 11, 1995, the terrorists had set fire to the Charar-e-Sherif mosque near Srinagar. It had been held by Pak-aided militants for two months. The mosque was the place where the 15th century Sufi saint Sheikh Nuruddin Noorani had been buried. He was believed to have preached Hindu-Muslim unity; he was called Nand Rishi by the Hindus. Ever since its renovation by Sheikh Abdullah in the fifties, the mosque used to attract both Hindu and Muslim pilgrims.

- ◆ On July 24, 2000 S. Vijaya-lakshmi became the first woman Grandmaster in the International Chess tournament in Hyderabad.



- ❖ Nelson Mandela, who had led the black population in South Africa in their struggle against apartheid, was released from prison after 26 years, on February 11, 1990.



- Two Soviet cosmonauts created a record by living in a spacecraft for 175 days (1979).
- Japan-made Walkman personal stereo hit the markets in 1979.



India's opposition to CTBT

The year 1996 was unique for India as it saw three Prime Ministers at the helm of affairs. In the election to the 11th Lok Sabha, the Congress lost its majority. And Narsimha Rao resigned. Having secured the largest number of seats, the BJP staked its claim to form a government with the help of 11 other parties. On May 16, they elected Atal Behari Vajpayee as their leader and he formed a ministry. However, on May 28, he failed to win a confidence vote. He, too, resigned. Thereafter, a United Front came into being with 13 parties as its constituents. H.D. Deve Gowda was chosen leader, and he took office on June 1.

India opposed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) at the global meet in Geneva. It was contended that as long as those nations producing nuclear arms do not agree to non-proliferation, such a treaty would not have any effect.



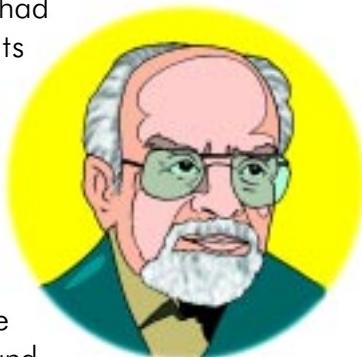
H.D. Deve Gowda

The third world countries would continue to face a threat from such weapons. India, whose argument was well-received, refused to sign the treaty.

India had two Prime Ministers in 1997. On April 11, the Lok Sabha rejected the confidence motion moved by Deve Gowda and he resigned. Earlier, on March 30, the Congress (I) had withdrawn its support to the United Front. On April 21, I.K. Gujral was elected leader of the United Front and he took over as the country's 12th

Prime Minister. His ministry, too, was short-lived. On November 28, the Congress (I) withdrew its support to the Gujral Ministry. He resigned and, on his recommendation, the President dissolved the Lok Sabha and ordered fresh elections.

On July 25, 1997, K.R. Narayanan was sworn in as the tenth President of India.



I.K. Gujral



K.R. Narayanan

Tamil Nadu, which witnessed the gory spectacle of an assassination in 1991 when Rajiv Gandhi died in an explosion triggered by a human bomb, was once again the scene of another explosion—this time in Coimbatore on February 14, 1998. Bombs exploded at 18 different places resulting in the death of 84 persons. One explosion took place at the venue where the BJP President L.K. Advani was expected to address an election rally. A Muslim militant organisation claimed responsibility for the incident.

- ◆ India won the World Cup Cricket final for the first time on June 25, 1983. At the Lord's in London, they beat West Indies by 43 runs. By a happy coincidence, it was at Lord's, on June 25, 1932, that India had played their first Test against England.

Elsewhere in the world ...

❖ The collapse of communism in Europe was complete when the once formidable Soviet Union disintegrated and the constituent countries became independent. Boris Yeltsin forced Gorbachev to hand over power to him. On December 24, 1991 Yeltsin became President of the Republic of Russia.



Boris Yeltsin

- The first ever feature film on Mahatma Gandhi, directed by Richard Attenborough, was released for screening in 1982. It won eight Oscars, including the ones for Best Film, Best Direction, and Best Actor (Ben Kingsley, who took the title role).

India tests its nuclear capability

India went for elections to the 12th Lok Sabha in March 1998. No political party had even a working majority. The BJP and its allies polled 277 seats, while the Congress (I) could muster only 141 seats. Atal Behari

A.B. Vajpayee Vajpayee was elected leader of the BJP-led coalition. He took oath of office as the 12th Prime Minister on March 19. On March 28, he won a vote of confidence by a margin of 13 votes.

India once again tested a nuclear device on May 11, 1998 at Pokhran, in Rajasthan. Two days later, another test was conducted, to make sure that India has the capability of conducting tests with remote control.

Terrorism continued to raise its ugly head in 1999—in Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Orissa, Delhi, and Tripura. The nation went into a shock when an Indian Airlines plane flying from Kathmandu in Nepal to Delhi was hijacked on December 24. It landed at Kandahar, in Afghanistan, the next day. The 189 passengers and crew were released after six days of negotiations.



India and Pakistan agreed to run a regular bus service between New Delhi and Lahore. Prime Minister Vajpayee went on the maiden journey on February 20, 1999. The next day, he signed the Lahore Declaration with his counterpart, Nawaz Sharif, to renew friendship between the two countries.

This was vitiated when Pakistani infiltrators occupied India's outposts in Kargil on the Kashmir border. The country had to wage a minor war to resist further infiltration and send back those who were already in Indian territory. The war lasted 74 days from May 26, 1999.

The Vajpayee government was thrown out of power on April 17 by a single vote in the Lok Sabha. On April 26, the Lok Sabha was dissolved. Fresh elections were held in five phases in September. The National Democratic Alliance led by



the BJP secured 269 seats. With the support of the Telugu Desam Party, the NDA came back to power with Atal Behari Vajpayee as Prime Minister. He formed a 70-member ministry on October 13, 1999.

- ◆ P.T. Usha, representing India at the Asian Track and Field Meet in Jakarta in 1985, won five gold medals (one in relay) and a bronze, which was a record for an Indian woman athlete.



- ◆ On December 24, 2000 Viswanathan Anand won the World Chess title in Teheran. He is the first Asian to win the World Championship.



Elsewhere in the world ...

❖ Peace talks to end the 45-year-old Palestine problem began at the instance of US President Bill Clinton. On September 13, 1993, the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)



Yasser Arafat

Chairman Yasser Arafat agreed to continue peace talks towards the establishment of an independent state of Palestine.

- Doctors attached to the Utah University Medical Center in the USA, on December 2, 1982, successfully planted for the first time an artificial heart made of fibre glass and polyurethane in a 61-year-old man.



USA, Russia support India's stand

The last year of the 20th century was marked by the visit of two world leaders — President Bill Clinton of the USA and President Vladimir Putin of Russia, in the first half and second half of 2000. Bill Clinton was in India on March 19 and 20; it was the first visit of an American President in 20 years. He was critical of the cross-border terrorism perpetrated by Pakistan and stated that respect for the line of control is a must for bilateral talks to ease the Indo-Pak tension.

The Russian President, who arrived on October 2 on a four day visit, criticised foreign interference in the Indo-Pak conflict. India signed a memorandum of understanding with Russia on intensifying bilateral cooperation in the peaceful uses of atomic energy.

The formation of three new states was a major event during 2000. Chattisgarh, carved out of Madhya Pradesh, came into existence on October 31. Some districts of Uttar Pradesh were brought together to form Uttarakhand, which came into being on November 8. Jharkhand, the 28th state of the Indian Union, came into



Bill Clinton

existence on November 14 after its separation from Bihar.

The government decided on February 15 that the size of the Lok Sabha (545 seats) would remain the same for the next 25 years.

While terrorist activities continued in Kashmir, the year went without any prospect of a resumption of talks between India and Pakistan. There were also instances of across-the-border firing by both nations. Nevertheless, Prime Minister Vajpayee took a bold decision when he announced, on November 19, a unilateral ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir during the holy month of Ramzan. On December 20, he extended this gesture to January 26, 2001.

The Vajpayee government felt the advisability of embarking on a review of the half-century old Constitution of India and appointed a 11-member National Commission for the purpose. The Prime Minister, both in the Parliament and elsewhere, held out the assurance that the country would remain a vibrant democracy as ever.



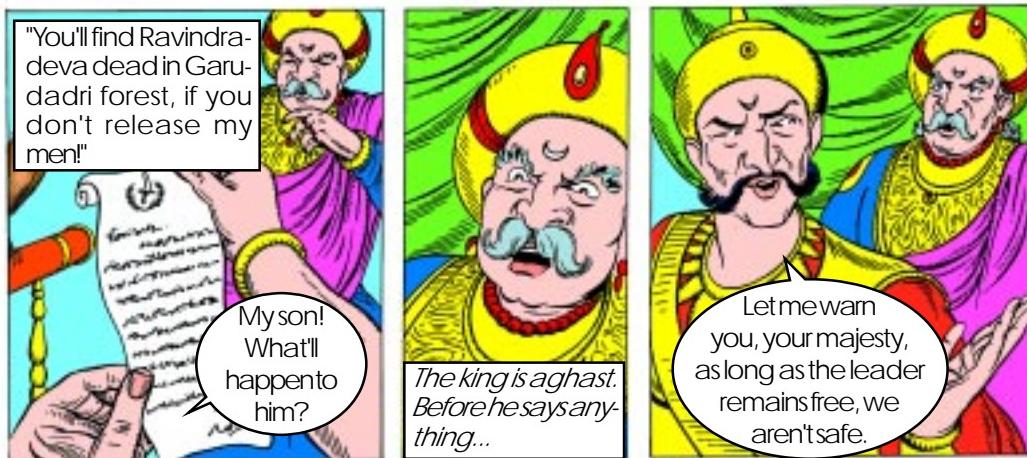
Vladimir Putin

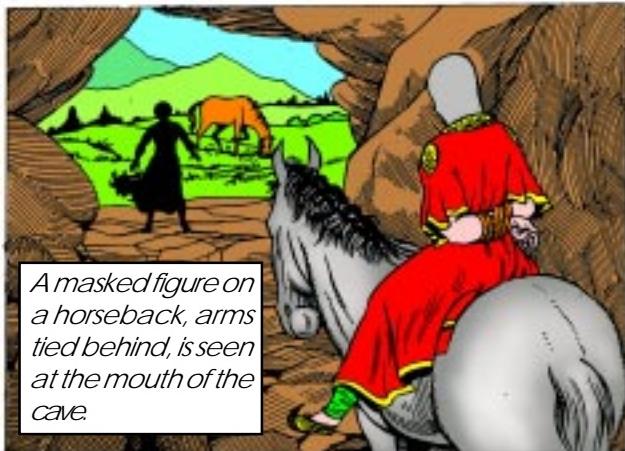
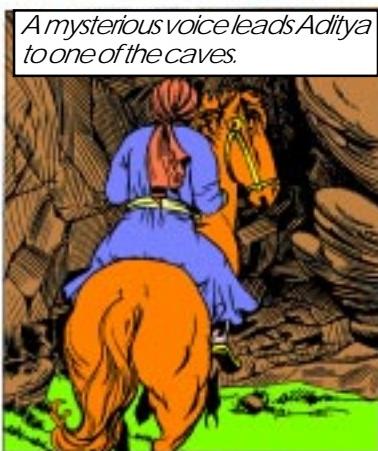
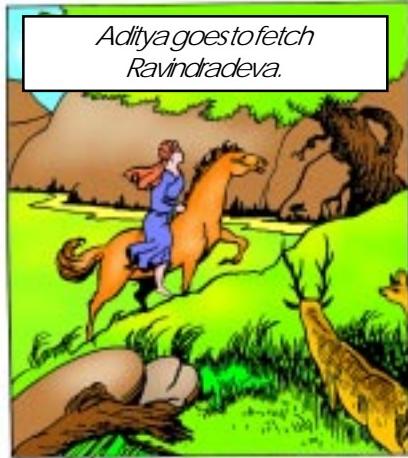
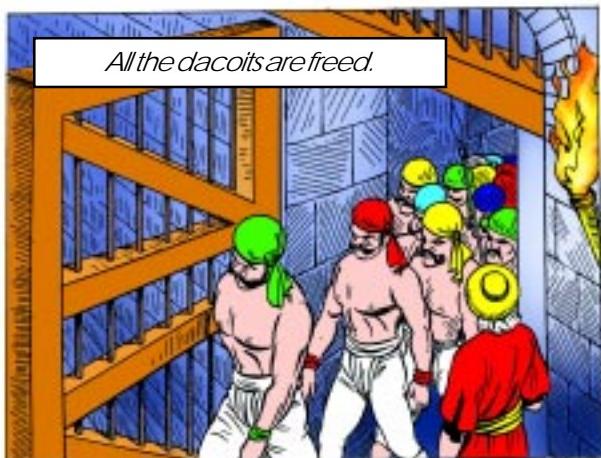
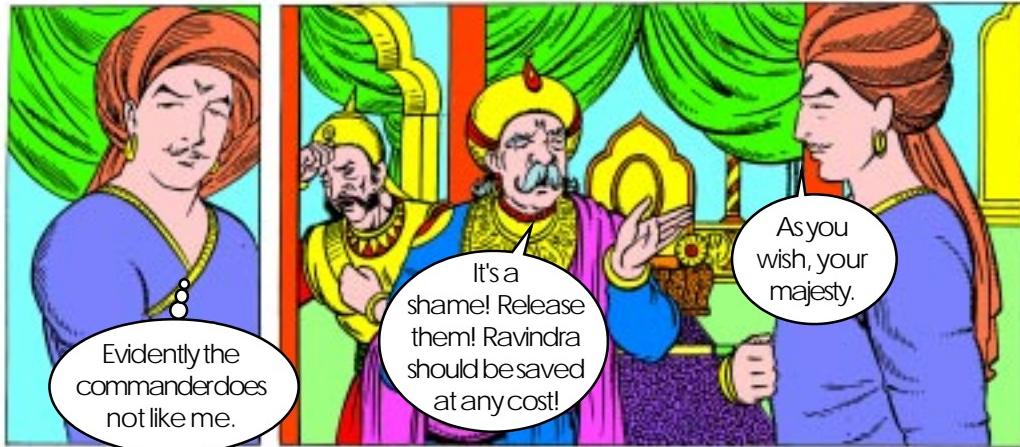
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Garuda the Invincible

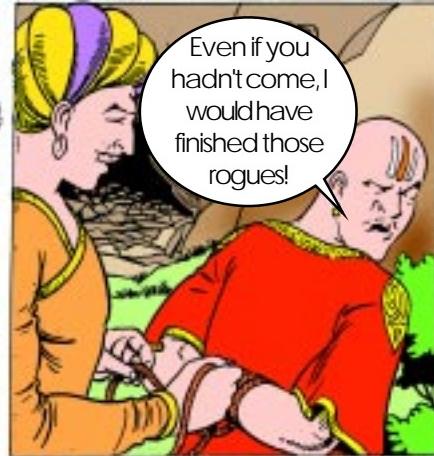
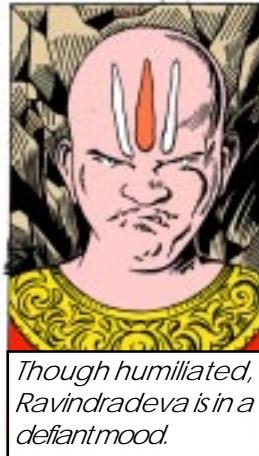
Art : PAANI

Aditya, son of the Prime Minister, who is recalled to Chandrapuri, rounds up the rebels who have been harassing the officials. Aruna tells him that her father and his father had met with their end the same night. She hands him a book. Aditya recognises his father's handwriting. The book tells the story of Garuda and his mother.





As he unmasks him, Aditya can no help a smile.

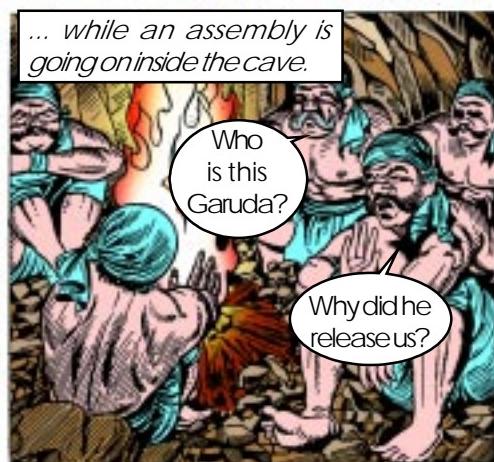


*Though humiliated,
Ravindradeva is in a
defiant mood.*

*Even if you
hadn't come, I
would have
finished those
rogues!*



*The mountainous region
is bathed in moonlight. A
man in disguise stands
guard...*



*... while an assembly is
going on inside the cave.*

*Who
is this
Garuda?*

*Why did he
release us?*

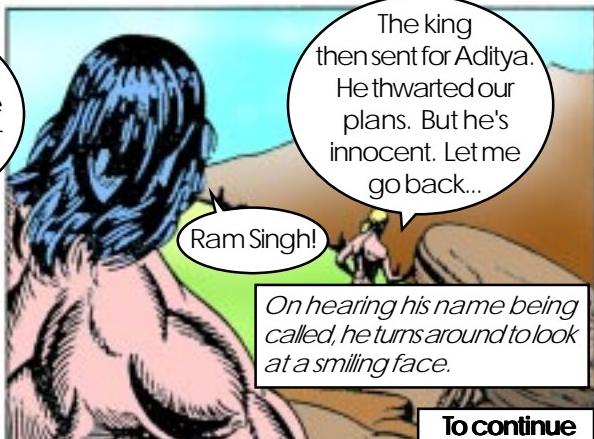
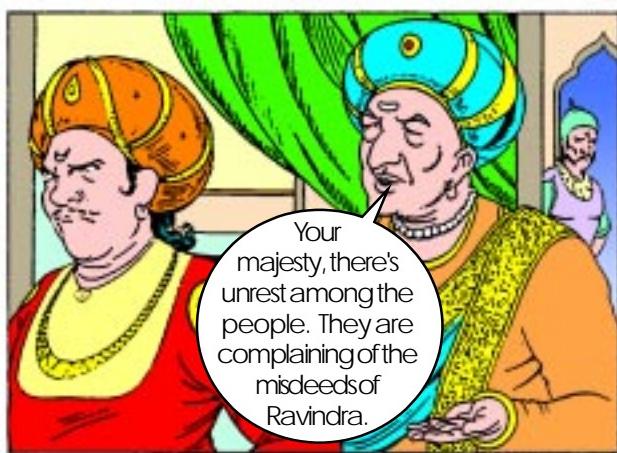
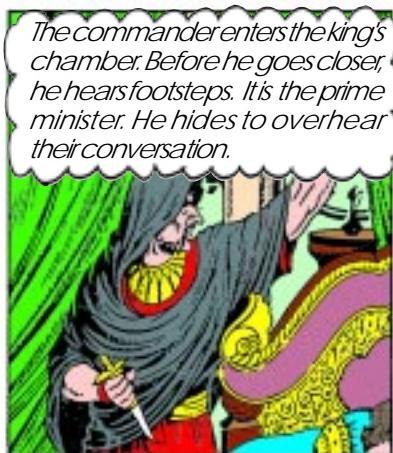
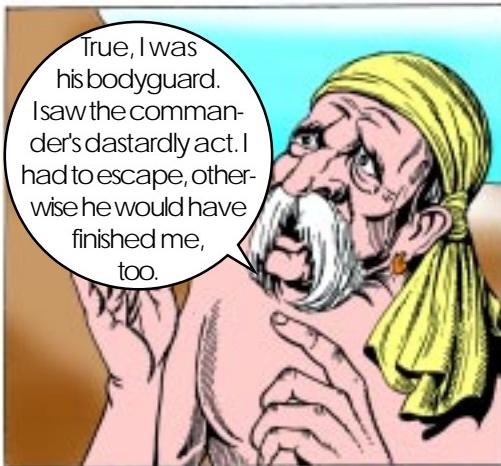


*Weren't you the
prime minister's
bodyguard?*

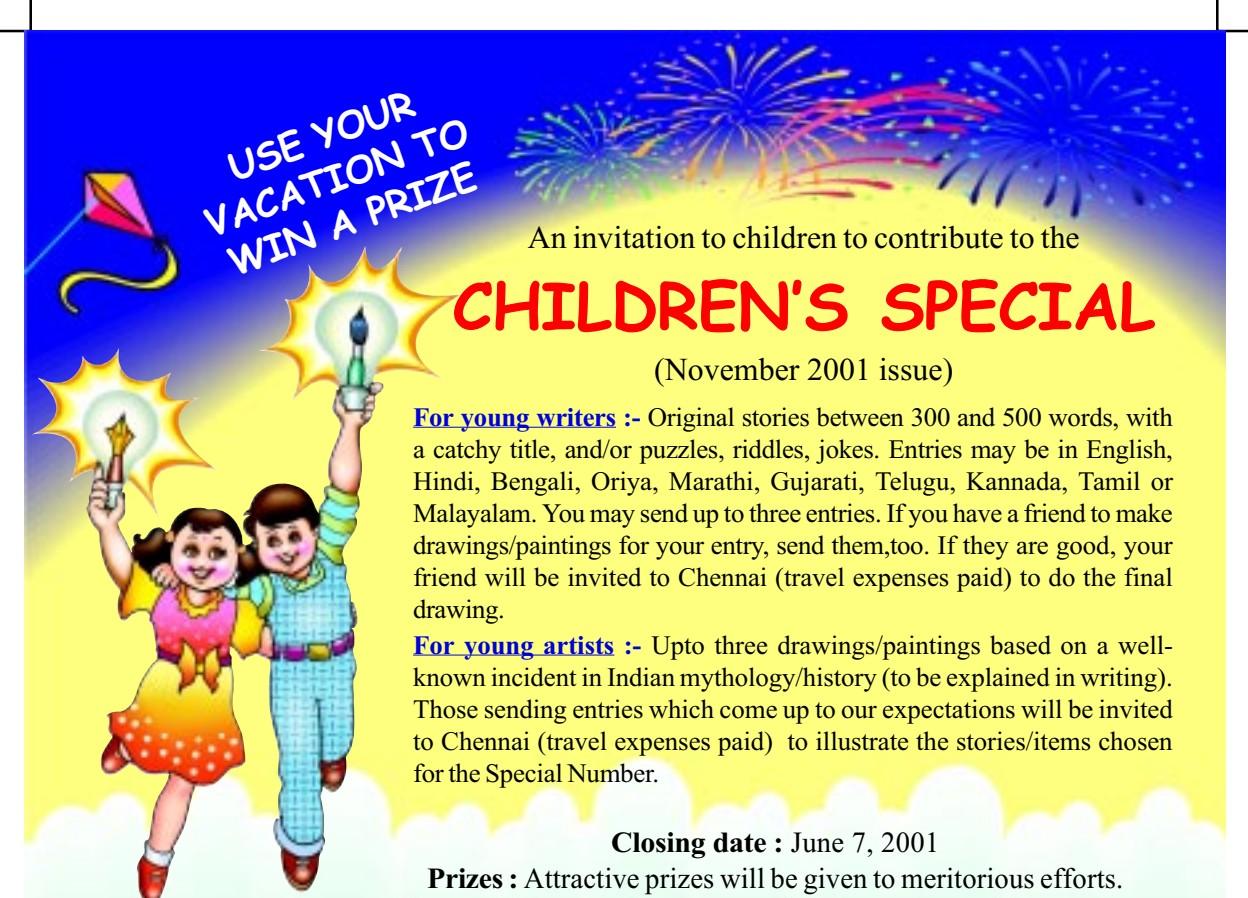
*Thanks
to you, we're
free. But who're
you?*



*Do you
realise that whatever
you're all doing is
unlawful?*



To continue



USE YOUR
VACATION TO
WIN A PRIZE



An invitation to children to contribute to the

CHILDREN'S SPECIAL

(November 2001 issue)

For young writers :- Original stories between 300 and 500 words, with a catchy title, and/or puzzles, riddles, jokes. Entries may be in English, Hindi, Bengali, Oriya, Marathi, Gujarati, Telugu, Kannada, Tamil or Malayalam. You may send up to three entries. If you have a friend to make drawings/paintings for your entry, send them, too. If they are good, your friend will be invited to Chennai (travel expenses paid) to do the final drawing.

For young artists :- Up to three drawings/paintings based on a well-known incident in Indian mythology/history (to be explained in writing). Those sending entries which come up to our expectations will be invited to Chennai (travel expenses paid) to illustrate the stories/items chosen for the Special Number.

Closing date : June 7, 2001

Prizes : Attractive prizes will be given to meritorious efforts.

Photo : Please attach a passport size photo along with your entry.

Name : Age/Date of Birth :

Class : School :

Home address :

..... Pin Code :

Description of entries :-

1.
2.
3.

I hereby certify that the entries mentioned above are the original, unaided work of my son/daughter. I hereby agree to *Chandamama* holding full copyright on the selected entry and using it in the print and electronic media and in any language.

Signature of Participant

Signature of Parent

[Please fill the form on the reverse and return]

I. Are you a paid subscriber of *Chandamama*? If so, state in which language you read the magazine :

.....

II. If you are not a paid subscriber, state the source from where you get a copy (put ✓ mark)

News vendor :

Library :

Friend :

III. How many persons read your copy?

.....

IV. State which features you like most (in the order of your preference) :-

1.....

2.....

3.....

4.....

5.....

6.....

V. State which features you miss in *Chandamama* and which you would like to see in the magazine :-

1.....

2.....

3.....

4.....

VI. Which type of drawings have attracted you? (Mention the issue date and the title of the story/topic/feature) :-

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

VII. In the last six issues, which cover drawing had attracted you most? (Mention language and issue date) :

.....

VIII. a) Profession/vocation of your

Father :

Mother :

b) Family income (monthly) (put ✓ mark)

Rs.5,000 :

Rs.5,001—10,000 :

More than Rs.10,000 :

IX Do you watch TV?

Doordarshan :

Satellite Channel :

X Is your TV B/Wor
Colour.....? ?

XI How do you commute to school?

By school bus :

By city bus :

By own vehicle:

2 wheeler :

4 wheeler :

Who drops you at school?

Parents :

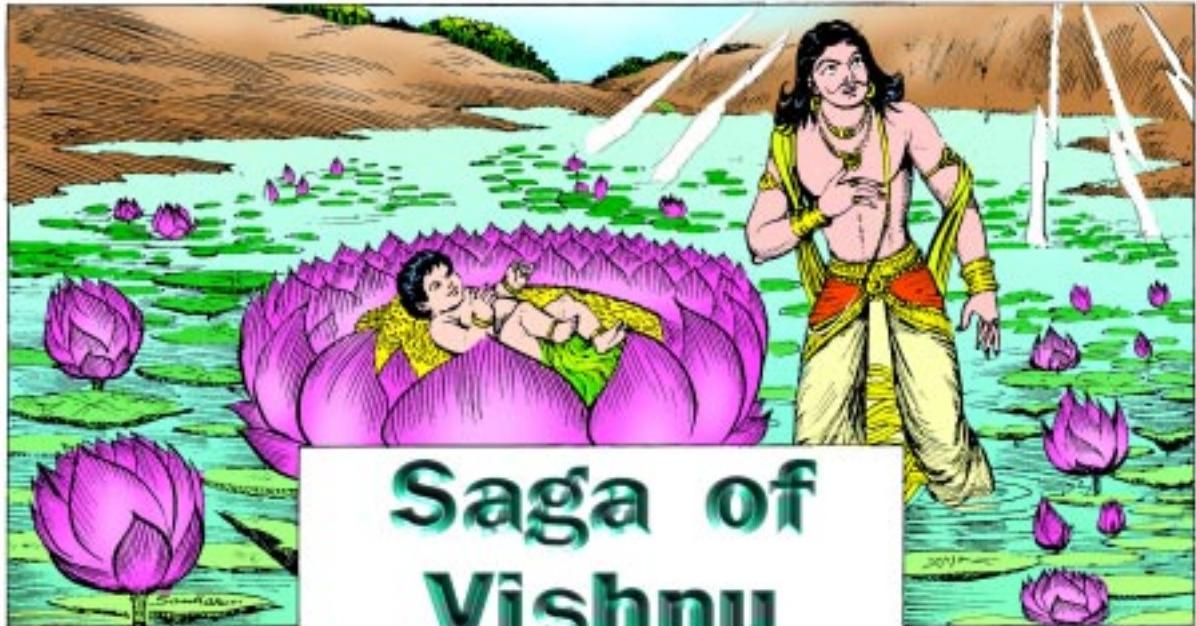
Driver :

XII Are you subscribing for any other children's magazine?

Name :

XIII Do you buy books? If so, what kind?

.....



Saga of Vishnu

11. Vishwamitra and his two disciples

Once Lakshmi in the form of Vedavati was deep in meditation when Ravana fell in love with her and asked her to go with him to Lanka. When she refused, he was furious and dragged her by the hair to force her to go with him. Enraged and revolted by his touch, Vedavati created a pyre with her yogic powers and entered it. Her body was reduced to ashes. She then took birth once again in Lanka.

Ravana, in the meantime, continued to rule in Lanka. Every morning he bathed in a lake near the palace. After bath, he would collect the lovely lotuses that bloomed there for his daily worship of Lord Shiva.

One day, he saw a particularly bright and beautiful flower. When he went near the flower, he saw a newborn baby girl swathed in bright light cradled in the petals. As he bent down, a voice from the sky declared: "Hey Ravana, this baby has come like a comet to destroy you and your land Lanka."

Ravana at once recoiled as if someone had struck him and ordered that the baby be killed. What was strange was that, no matter what method or weapon the rakshasas used they were not able to kill the baby. Swords disappeared when they were lifted to strike her; fires died down when they tried to burn her;

and rocks became flowers when she was struck with them. When they threw her to the wild animals, they turned tame and harmless. At their wit's end, the rakshasas put the lovely baby in a box made of five metals and threw the box into the sea. The box crossed the sea and cut

object, it was found to be a box. Inside was a beautiful looking baby girl. The king was delighted at the turn of events. He considered the baby a gift of Mother Earth and adopted her as his daughter.

The point of the plough is called Sita (in Sanskrit) and Janaka called the baby Sita. As she was Janaka's daughter, she was also known as Janaki. Sita grew up in Janaka's palace, cherished and loved by all.

One day, Sita was playing with a ball with her friends when it rolled off and came to rest under the great bow of Shiva. Sita came searching for it and finally spotted it beneath the bow. She casually lifted the bow and picked up her missing ball.

King Janaka, who saw her lift the bow, was amazed. Even a strong man would not so easily lift the heavy bow. In fact, it normally needed the strength of three hundred men to lift it. Lord Shiva had used the bow to kill Tripurasura. The bow had been worshipped by Janaka's ancestors for many years.

So, when Janaka saw Sita lift the bow, he decided that any suitor who came to marry Sita would have to lift and string the bow to show his worthiness.

Sita soon grew up and it was



through the earth and drifted far away.

Janaka, the King of Mithila, was a learned and enlightened king. He was ploughing a piece of land to level it out for performing a yagna. Suddenly, his plough struck something hard. When they dug out the

time to get her married. King Janaka announced a *swayamvara* for her and announced that the person who would win Sita's hand would have to lift and string Shiva's mighty bow.

In the meantime, the great sage Vishwamitra arrived at King Dasaratha's court and asked him whether he could send two of his young princes to protect him in the forest from the rakshasas who were disturbing his worship and prevented him from carrying out the holy sacrifices.

Dasaratha was most unwilling to do so. "The princes are so young and tender. How will they bear the hard life in the forests?" he pleaded. "Besides, they have not yet learnt the skills of warfare and will not be able to protect you. They are really too young."

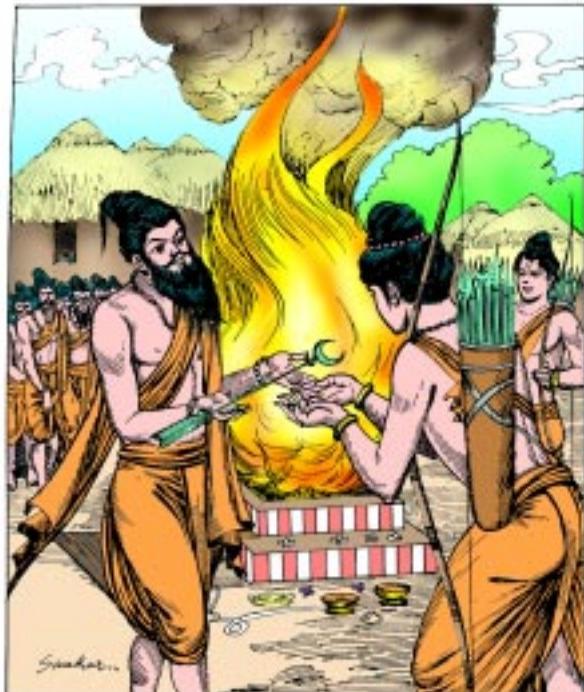
Vishwamitra reassured him: "That's one of the reasons why I've come. I'll teach the princes all they need to know about the arts of war. I'll make them very skilful, and they will be able to take on anybody."

"There's no one better than Vishwamitra to undertake this job," said Sage Vasishtha with a smile. "Besides, what Vishwamitra suggests is for the good of the people."



King Dasaratha with a heavy heart let his sons Rama and Lakshmana go. The princes, dressed in simple clothes like the students of an ashram, followed Vishwamitra.

On the way to the ashram, Vishwamitra kept the boys engaged with tips on archery and other war skills. Under his care, the princes soon became skilled archers. After sometime, when Vishwamitra started preparing for a great sacrifice or *yagna*, Tadaka, a demoness, attacked the ashram with her companions. Vishwamitra asked Rama to kill Tadaka. Rama sent a shower of arrows at Tadaka, and she fell to the ground with a frightful roar and died.



Soon afterwards the yajna began. Vishwamitra asked Rama and Lakshmana to guard the ashram while the yajna was going on. As soon as the rituals began, the rakshasas Maricha and Subahu fell upon the ashram. Rama killed Subahu with his arrows. Maricha was wounded and he ran into the sea and soon swam to Lanka.

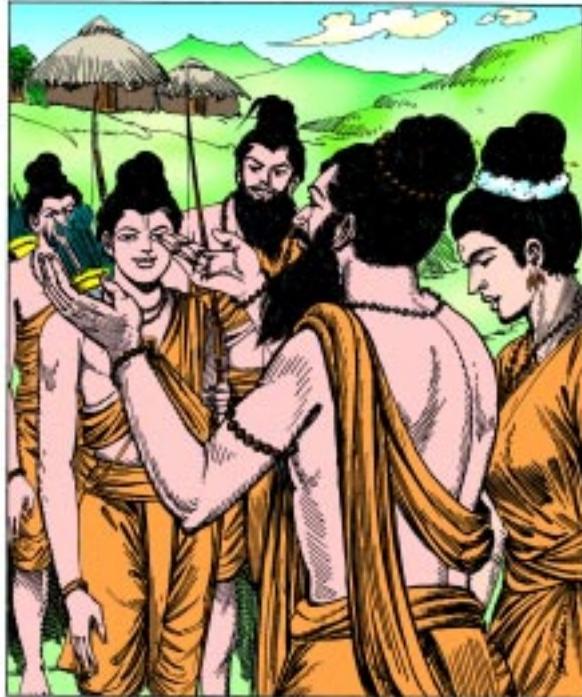
After that the ceremonies went on without any disturbances. At the end of the yajna, a glowing arrow emerged from the sacrificial fire. Vishwamitra presented the arrow to Rama and said: "This divine arrow is for you, Rama. This will become famous in the world as your weapon. This Ramaban will destroy

all your enemies and come back to you each time." Rama accepted the arrow with reverence and put it in his quiver, and then bowed to touch Vishwamitra's feet.

Vishwamitra blessed Rama and said: "I've taught you whatever I know. I think I was fortunate to get a student like you." Rama thanked him for teaching him and sharing all his knowledge with him.

Rama and Lakshmana grew into fine young men at the ashram. Everyone spoke of their handsomeness and goodness. After some time, Vishwamitra took Rama and Lakshmana to visit Mithila. On the way, at Sage Gautama's ashram, Rama's foot happened to touch a stone and it came alive. This was Ahalya, Gautama's wife, who had been cursed to remain a stone till Rama came by. Ahalya fell at Rama's feet. Just then Gautama also arrived there after many years of tapasya. He said: "The touch of your feet has freed my wife from her curse. You must be Lord Vishnu's avatar Rama."

Rama was discomfited by such extravagant praise and his look seemed to ask, 'What did I do? Ahalya's time for freedom had come and she rose from the stone.'



Life-long is the love of the noble souls, while their anger is momentary. The sacrifice they make for others are motiveless.

- *The Hitopadesha*

Each of them thought how attractive the other was. Urmila and Lakshmana, too, were attracted to each other.

The next day, at the swayamvara, many kings and princes had gathered to try and win the hand of the beautiful Sita. Each tried to show his strength by lifting the bow of Shiva, but not one was able to do so.

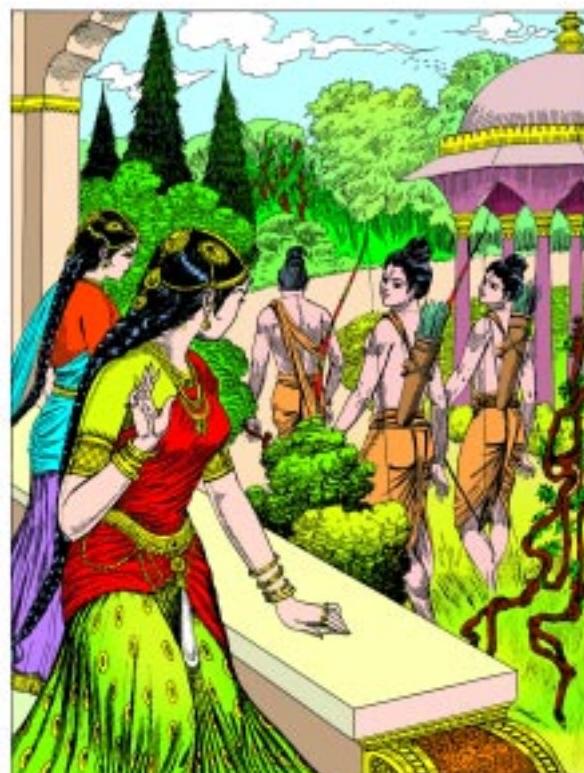
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Gautama guessed his thought and said: "You are powerful and brilliant, Rama."

Vishwamitra nodded in agreement.

Gautama's son Shathananda had been asked by King Janaka to invite all the sages and seers to Sita's swayamvara. As Vishwamitra was leaving with Rama and Lakshmana, he arrived there and, touching Vishwamitra's feet, he conveyed King Janaka's invitation.

Vishwamitra and the princes Rama and Lakshmana arrived at Mithila and were walking through a beautiful garden when they saw two lovely girls. Rama's eyes fell on Sita. Sita, too, shyly looked at Rama.



Know Your India

QUIZ

Many of you must have cultivated hobbies like philately (collecting stamps) and numismatics (study of coins). Find out for how many of the questions given below you know the correct answers:

1. What did the first post - Independence stamp depict?
2. Whose portrait was the first to be carried on a post - Independence stamp?
3. A stamp carrying the portrait of an Indian leader was released in January 2001. Who was the leader?
4. When was the first postage stamp issued in India?
5. In which year did India issue the first pictorial stamps? What was the occasion?
6. India was the first country to carry mail by air. When and where was this undertaken for the first time?
7. When we write addresses, we add PIN code. What is its full form? When was the system introduced in India?
8. Into how many regions has India been divided under the PIN code system?
9. India had several private postal systems. When did the British Government put a stop to this practice?
10. Which is the most prized among Indian stamps? Why?
11. A majority of the nations of the world have issued stamps in honour of an Indian leader. Who is he?
12. Where is the National Philatelic Museum located? (*Answers next month*)

Answers to March Quiz

1. Princess Meera of Mewar.
2. Bhakta Surdas
3. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, who lived in the 15th and 16th centuries.
4. Puri (East), Sringeri (South), Dwaraka (West), Jyothirmath in Badri (North), and in Kanchi, as some people believe in view of the fact that Sankaracharya had settled down in that place.
5. Avvaiyyar
6. Sant Kabir, who lived in the 15th and 16th centuries. In many of his songs, he stated, "God is one, whether we worship him as Allah or Ram."
7. Sai Baba of Shirdi
8. Ramanujacharya.

Bobby outwits his friends

The day had the feel of freshly laundered clothes. Its keen sunlit edges seemed to have a starchy spriteness. During recess, Bobby and a few of his friends were busy with a game of marbles. Bobby had finished last in the four games that had already been played. He was desperate to win this one. The final game began, and Bobby's fortunes were no different than in the previous games. While his fingers flipped limp shots, his mind spun a winning move that would take off some of the disgrace he felt.

"Hey, Bobby, you lost this one, too, but never mind, maybe it's just not your day," sneered pudgy Pradip.

Bobby flashed a dismissing smile.

"Losing is easy. However, remember our agreed penalty for a consistent loser?" quipped jackal-brained Bhargav, who always had ready smart answers for every situation.

Bobby stiffened; he had feared this. But he was ready with his attack, too.

"Well, so buy us our ice-creams," chorused the group. Akash, whose girth seemed to have the expanse of the dome above, squinted hard at the sun and then seemed to make up his mind: "I need to have a special sundae."



"Great, so you at least know one thing that you want; that means you at least have some kind of mind," Bobby cut him through.

"Okay, Bobby, we all know how smart you are, but that does not mean you won't buy us ice-creams." To put emphasis on what he had said, Akash flexed his biceps once.

"That's why you people are so pathetic, you always put the body before brains," finished Bobby with great pomp.

"What do you mean?" Four pairs of menacing eyes turned on him.

Bobby relished the moment; now he had them all. "Nothing, except, I'll ask you a riddle and if you can answer that, I'll feed you double shares of ice-creams, and if you can't, well, I ask nothing in return. Ready?"



Four heads nodded in unison.
Bobby began with aplomb.

"A man lives on the 18th floor of an apartment building. Every day he uses the elevator to go up to the fourth floor; from there he walks up the stairs to the other 14 floors. Why?"

Silence. Nobody ventured an answer. The sun put a sparkle to all it touched with its wands of rays, but the boys all felt themselves in clueless darkness.

As the silence stretched, Bobby made quite a scene of checking his watch. Then with a vigorous shake of his head and hands, he finally came out with: "Well, I really cannot give you people any more time. You are taking much too long for such a simple riddle. Do you give up?"

Again silence. And then four heads nodded in unison.

"So here's the answer. The man is too short to reach any other buttons on the elevator!" The words out of his mouth, before giving the others any time to reach, Bobby made for a mad dash for home.

For the first few steps he could not control his smirk, thinking how he had beaten them all. Well, he was not going to waste his pocket-money on those pea-brained fellows, especially when he had won such a hefty sum from his cousin Rudie, also through a similar tricky teaser. What was it? Bobby asked himself. And then he could not stop himself from shaking through helpless peals of laughter. The riddle was a cranky one:

The one who makes it, sells it; the one who buys it, doesn't need it; the one who needs it, doesn't care for it. What is it?

Terrible truth — the invisible man's shadow !

But just as suddenly as the sharp peals had broken out, all the mirth dried up in him and the smirk was wiped clean from his face. To restrain Rudie from going to work on him, there was a lengthy trail his parents, and uncle and aunt, but who would stop Akash and gang from beating the pulp out of him? And he had to get

back to school tomorrow ... or could be sick ... but sick for how long? Oh tomorrow always seems to be the bane of life, the present is a gift, but tomorrow has to be earned. Can't we do without a tomorrow in life? Why couldn't he beat tomorrow through a real tough-muscled poser?

Bobby wracked his brains for a winning move. He mentally ticked off all those he had heard in all the competitions and shows he had attended, and his grandmother had recounted, and all those he had gleaned out of magazines in school, stores, and even waste paper baskets. Nothing seemed challenging enough to the grit of tomorrow. The usual ones doing the rounds kept popping up. He resolutely pushed them back and tried digging deep into his memory to unearth some that would, if not stop, at least delay the march of tomorrow.

*What waves, but has no arms
Flaps, but has no wings
And stands, but has no legs?*

Would this keep tomorrow at bay?
Bobby shook his head dejectedly.
Wasn't the answer quite apparent?
Yes, it was — a flag!

How about this? For a moment, Bobby's eyes were ablaze as they caught a flaming ray of the setting sun:

*I have a mouth, but never speak
I have a bed, but never sleep
What am I?*

Once out in the light, its tough

character seemed to soften. The answer could be seen through. It was simple, after all — a river.

Never to give up easily, Bobby gave a final try:

*You feed me - I live.
You give me a drink - I die.
What am I?*

No, this would not do, too. The first guess would bring the answer out — it was that straight forward. Correct! Fire was the answer.



I'm beaten this time, thought Bobby, it is just not enough to be smart; you have to be an all-round smarty. For one instant, Bobby wished he had given the gang the ice-creams that had been agreed to. True, he would have hated to lose all that



money with which he could have bought quiz books, but then he would not have been in such trouble, too.

Bobby's lips twisted into a wretched smile—was he a show-off or was he too clever for his own good? There was only one person

who could help him out. But there was no way of reaching him unless he came to you. Could prayers be the answer? Bobby remembered in a rush that he had read somewhere that no sincere prayer went unanswered. Bobby closed his eyes. Nothing stirred in the heavy heat-laden air of the afternoon. It seemed, all around had drawn in their breath in expectation. But of what? In the hush that spread could only be heard the drone of Bobby's voice. Nothing happened, everything remained as still and Bobby's resolute figure like flagpole seemed to slacken.

Then, Bobby felt a gentle ruffle through his hair but it was not the wind, and he knew his friend — the wise spirit of the ages was here. The old man was the same as before — his skin was crinkled and yet he breathed energy.

"Well, Bobby, we meet again and once again to avoid tomorrow. But before I get into that, here's a tough cracker for you that you are looking for.

"A man has been convicted of theft, but he maintains that he has not done it. Something in his pleading tells the king that he might be telling the truth — the man could have been framed. Being renowned as just, the king decided to give the man a chance, but through a devious manner. So, he tells the distraught man, 'I do not like to condemn anybody. Therefore, I shall

give you a chance to save yourself. Your life is yours if you can find a way out. Are you ready?"

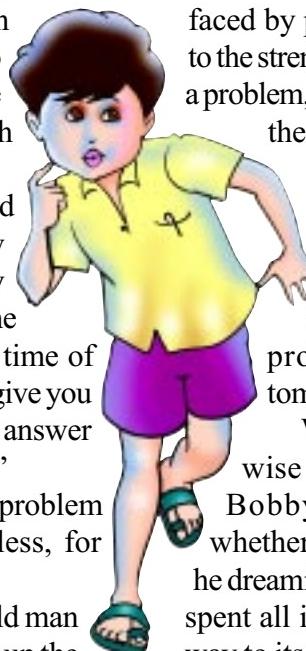
"In assent, the man bows.

"The king then continues: 'I'm going to lock you in the cell and if you can't find the exact time for 45 minutes, you will stay there forever. But if you find the exact time from when I lock you up to the next 45 minutes, I'll release you. You will be given two ropes and two matches. Each rope takes 30 minutes to burn. But the ropes have different spots where each rope goes faster.'

"So, Bobby," the old man turns on him, "how will this man survive by using the two ropes and the matches to get the exact time of 45 minutes? I won't even give you time to think, because the answer is way out of your reach."

The difficulty of the problem rendered Bobby speechless, for once.

Without a break, the old man continued. "The man sets up the ropes in the shape of a lollipop. He lights both ends of one rope and it takes twice as fast to burn which would kill 15 minutes. He then lights the full rope that supposedly is the 'stick' of the lollipop. That takes another 30 minutes. The 15 minutes plus the 30 minutes equal the 45



minutes he has! Is it clear now?"

"Can the convicted man get to this answer and save his life?" asked Bobby.

"I don't remember that now, it happened such a long time ago. It was I who gave this idea to the king. Anyway, I told you this just to show that however difficult a problem may seem, there's always an answer to it, too. And remember, the difficulties faced by people are in direct relation to the strength they have. So if you have a problem, know this, too, that you have the ability to solve it. As you have found out before, you can't avoid tomorrow. And this time round you've come to know that you've the possibility to solve the problems surrounding your tomorrow."

With these words, the kindly wise man was gone. Leaving Bobby wondering as always whether he had dreamt it all, or was he dreaming now? The setting sun had spent all its splendour and was on its way to its bed. Bobby, too, was spent. But he had been given a chance to solve a tough question — would tomorrow be good or bad? Would Akash and gang beat him or would he trick them to remain his friends?

Bobby hoped he was as smart as the old man, maybe with time.

Parama Ray

When the roof flew away

We have grown accustomed to sudden storms up here at 7,000 feet in the Himalayan foothills, and the old building in which I live has, for over a hundred years, received the brunt of the wind and the rain as they sweep across the hills from the east. We had lived in the building for over ten years without any untoward happening. It had even taken the shock of an earthquake without sustaining any major damage; it is difficult to tell the new cracks from the old.

This is a three storey building, and I live on the top floor with my adopted family—three children and their parents. The roof consists of corrugated tin sheets, the ceiling of

wooden boards. That's the traditional hill-station roof. Ours had held fast in many a storm, but the wind that night was stronger than what we had ever known. It was cyclonic in its intensity, and it came rushing at us with a high-pitched eerie wail.

The old roof groaned and protested at the unrelieved pressure. It took this battering for several hours, while the rain lashed against the windows, and the lights kept coming and going.

There was no question of sleeping, but we remained in bed for warmth and comfort. The fire had long since gone out, the chimney stack having collapsed, bringing down a shower of sooty rain-water.

After about four hours of buffeting, the roof could take it no longer. My bedroom faces east, so my portion of the roof was the first to go.

The wind got under it and kept pushing until, with a ripping, groaning sound, the metal sheets shifted from their moorings, some of them dropping with claps like thunder into the road below. So that's it, I thought, nothing worse can happen. As long



as the ceiling stays on, I'm not getting out of my bed. We'll pick up the roof in the morning.

Icy water cascading down on my face made me change my mind in a hurry. Leaping from my bed, I found that much of the ceiling had gone, too. Water was pouring onto my open typewriter—the typewriter that had been my trusty companion for close on thirty years!—and onto the bedside radio, bed covers, and clothes cupboard. The only object that wasn't receiving any rain was the potted philodendron, which could have done with a little watering.

Picking up my precious typewriter and abandoning the rest, I stumbled into the front sitting-room (cum library), only to find that a similar situation had developed there. Water was pouring through the wooden slats, raining down on the bookshelves. By now I had been joined by the children, who had come to rescue me. Their section of the roof hadn't gone as yet. Their parents were struggling to close a window which had burst open, letting in lashings of wind and rain.

"Save the books!" shouted Dolly, the youngest, and that became our rallying cry for the next hour or two. Dolly and her brothers picked up armfuls of books and carried them into their room. But the floor was now awash all over the apartment, so the



books had to be piled on the beds. Dolly was helping me gather up some of my manuscripts when a large field rat leapt onto the desk in front of her. She squealed and ran for the door.

"It's all right," said Mukesh, whose love of animals extends even to field rats.

Big brother Rakesh whistled for our mongrel, Toby, but Toby wasn't interested in rats just then. He had taken shelter in the kitchen, the only dry spot in the house.

Two rooms were now practically roofless, and the sky was frequently lighted up for us by flashes of lightning. There were fireworks inside too, as water spluttered and crackled along a damaged electric wire. Then the lights went out altogether, which in some ways made the house a safer place. Prem, the children's father, is at his best in an emergency, and he had already located and lit two kerosene lamps; so we continued to transfer books, papers, and clothes to the children's room.

We noticed that the water on the

floor was beginning to subside a little. "Where is it going?" asked Dolly.

"Through the floor," said Mukesh. "Down to the rooms below."

He was right, too. Cries of consternation from our neighbours told us that they were now having their share of the flood.

Our feet were freezing because there hadn't been time to put on enough protective footwear, and in any case, shoes and slippers were now awash. Tables and chairs were also



piled high with books. I hadn't realised the considerable size of my library until that night!

The available beds were pushed into the driest corner of the children's room and there, huddled in blankets and quilts, we spent the remaining hours of the night, while the storm continued to threaten further mayhem.

But then the wind fell, and it began to snow. Through the door to the

sitting-room I could see snow-flakes drifting through the gaps in the ceiling, settling on picture frames, statuettes, and miscellaneous ornaments.

Mundane things like a glue bottle and a plastic doll took on a certain beauty when covered with soft snow. The clock on the wall had stopped and with its covering of snow reminded me of a painting by Salvador Dali. And my shaving-brush looked ready for use!

Most of us dozed off. I sensed that the direction of the wind had changed, and that it was now blowing from the west; it was making a rushing sound in the trees rather than in what remained of our roof. The clouds were scurrying away.

When dawn broke, we found the window-panes encrusted with snow and icicles. Then the rising sun struck through the gaps in the ceiling and turned everything to gold. Snow crystals glinted like diamonds on the empty book-shelves. I crept into my abandoned bedroom to find the philodendron looking like a Christmas tree.

Prem went out to find a carpenter and a tinsmith, while the rest of us started putting things in the sun to dry out. And by evening, we had got much of the roof on again.

It's a much-improved roof now, and I took forward to the approaching winter with some confidence!

Self-importance of the fly!

- ❖ *What is the meaning of the idiom “the fly on the coach-wheel” ? asks Leela Shankar of Visakhapatnam*

The famous *Aesop’s Fables* has the story of a fly which sits on the coach-wheel enjoying a ride. As the coach is being driven, dust rises from the road. And the self-important fly feels flattered when the dust hangs like clouds. “What a dust I make!” it observes, probably feeling that the dust has been caused because of its weight! We often meet people who think very high of themselves, but who do not really matter. Moreover, when they are part of an organisation, they even pat their own back that all the glory the organisation has achieved is due to their genius. We can compare them all to the fly on the coach-wheel !

- ❖ *Ramkumar Verma, of Lucknow, remembers US President Bill Clinton’s visit to India last year. A report in a newspaper adapted a Latin expression to describe the visit— “I came, I saw, and I was conquered.” What is the Latin phrase, asks reader Ramkumar.*

The great Roman emperor, Julius Caesar, after his victory over Pharnaces, is believed to have said : *Veni, Vidi, Vici* meaning “I came, I saw, I conquered”. The newspaper adapted the third word and said “I was conquered” in view of the American President’s exultation over what he experienced in India. He seems to have said before his departure that India has fascinated him and he would visit the country again. Hence the expression “I was conquered”.

Regi Thomas of Quilon wants to know about some “rare” phobias.

Have you a fear of heights? Then you suffer from acrophobia. Those who are afraid of snakes, they are subject to batrachophobia. If you are afraid of dogs, it is cynophobia; if cats, it is ailurophobia. If you are afraid of open spaces, you suffer from agoraphobia, and if you are afraid of crowds, it is ochlophobia!

Let us know



- ❖ A recent news item said, Britain may not return Koh-i-Noor to India. May I know more about this famous diamond ?

Reti Menon, Palghat

People first came to know of this priceless jewel in the late 15th century when it was in the possession of the Scindias of Gwalior. After the battle of Panipat in 1526, the Mughal emperor Humayun came to possess it. During his exile from India earlier, he had received help from the King of Persia (now called Iran). As a token of gratitude, Humayun made a gift of the diamond to the king who, in turn, presented it to Burhan Nizam Shah, the ruler of Ahmednagar. A trader-turned politician got hold of it by unscrupulous means, and he took it to Shah Jehan, who was known as the great Mughal builder. The diamond came to adorn the Mughal crown. In 1739, Nadir Shah of Persia invaded Delhi, which he plundered for days together. By a ruse, he managed to exchange his diamond-studded turban for the Mughal crown. It was he who gave the name Koh-i-Noor or ‘mountain of light’ to the diamond. He was killed in 1747, and the diamond passed on to the Afghan Chief Ahmad Shah Abdali. One of his descendants gave it to the ruler of the Punjab, Maharaja Ranjit Singh, whose successor presented it to Queen Victoria when she assumed the title Empress of India. The diamond had ever since adorned the British monarch’s crown. Only on ceremonial occasions is it worn. The crown is otherwise kept in the Tower of London on display.

- ❖ What is the Eight Fold Path of Buddhism ?

Hemchandra Mohanti, Puri

Right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration constitute the Eight Fold Path.

- ❖ Why is the Dead Sea so called ?

- Raman Agarwal, Calcutta

The river Jordan flows into this salt lake located in southern Palestine. Many events described in *The Bible* are believed to have taken place around this lake. Two ancient towns, Sodom and Gomorrah, were submerged in this lake. People once believed that any bird flying over the lake fell dead; no plants thrived in the surrounding areas. And the lake does not develop waves. All indicating it is dead!

A PICK FROM OUR MAIL BAG

Amarjeet Prabhudesai has sent this e-mail from Bombay :

I am a regular reader of *Chandamama* ever since somebody gifted a subscription to me. Your February issue was very interesting and informative, especially about India in the 20th century, and the parallel world events. Even my parents and grandfather learnt something new out of it. Keep up the good work. My entire family takes interest in *Chandamama*.

● *Chandamama has always attracted adult readers. We hope our young readers will recommend it to the seniors in the family.* - Editor.

Reader Sandeep Jadhav, Pune, has this to say :

I am a reader of *Chandoba* Marathi edition of *Chandamama*. It is one of the most effective story-books in India. I started reading it

15 years ago when I was six. I like the drawings of Sankar, Chitra, Paani, and others. They are Number One illustrators in India. Do you have a website of *Chandoba*?

This came from Mary Ann, by e-mail from Kajang, Malaysia :

I simply love reading *Chandamama*, especially the tales of King Vikram. Congratulations on the new look, it really looks great. Do you have a website?

● *Readers Sandeep and Mary will be interested to know that a project (website) is on the anvil.* -Editor

Also by e-mail from Anupama, B.

I have been reading *Chandamama* for the past 25 years. I agree with reader Kailash Sharma (February issue). Your magazine is indeed serving the nation and the community in a good way. It will be appreciated if you can prepare special issues on the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. People like us will surely buy them. Our children can also benefit from them.

● *Yes, we definitely have plans to bring out such books.* -Editor





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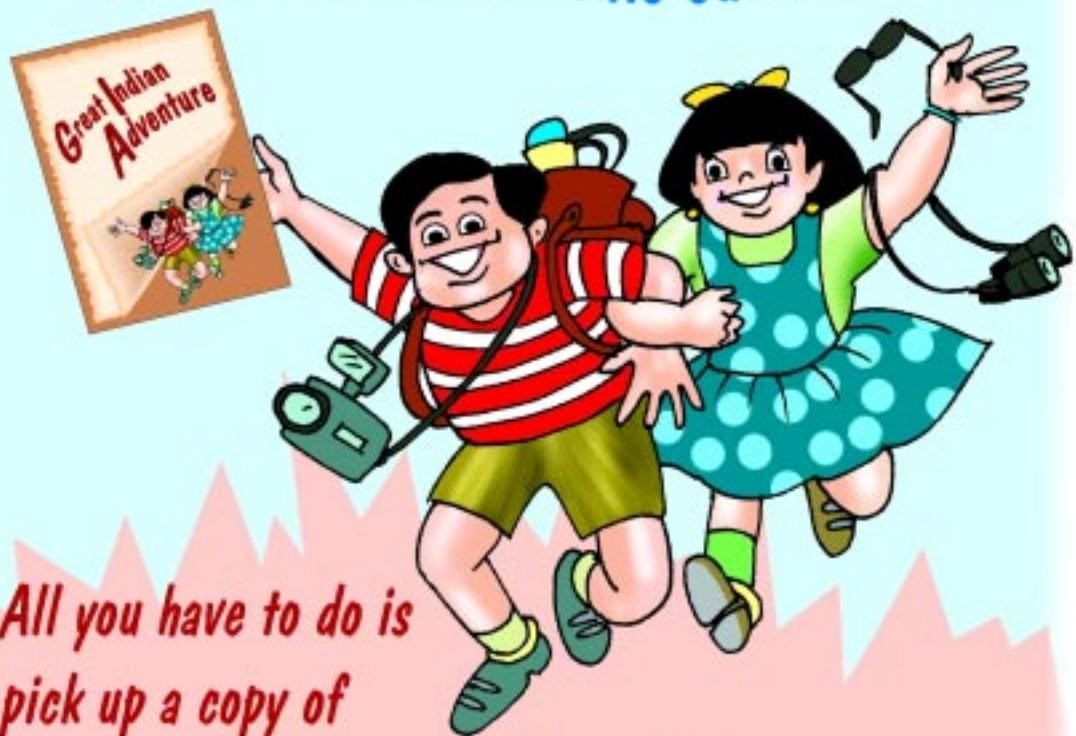
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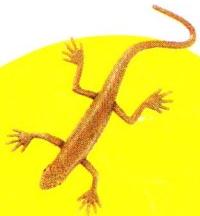


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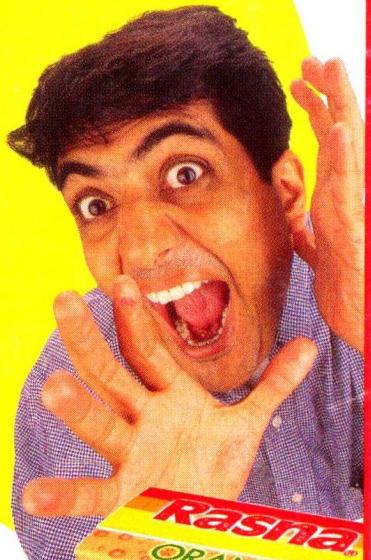
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